A Century of Service

HISTORY OF

First Baptist Church

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

1859 1959

J. CLYDE TURNER

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First Baptist Church

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

J. CLYDE TURNER

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Dedicated
to
the members of First Baptist Church
Greensboro, North Carolina
whose love and loyalty have never failed

INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORY of the First Baptist Church of Greensboro clearly reveals the hand of God at work in our city. It is an heroic story which began with pioneer Christians who held their loyalty to Christ through adverse conditions. From the very beginning, the members of this church practiced stewardship of money as well as that of time and service. Real sacrifice was required to meet the financial obligations of our church one hundred years ago.

A part of the centennial celebration should be an effort to recapture the spirit of giving and consecration of these noble men and women. Fortunate indeed are Southern Baptists and citizens of Greensboro to have had, through past decades, men of great convictions to lead the members of the church to make missions, evangelism, Bible study and church loyalty the foundation of all the work. To lead out in the spirit of missions, Dr. W. Carey Newton felt the call and left this pastorate to serve as a missionary in China. The author of this book, Dr. J. Clyde Turner, who served for thirty-eight years as pastor, continually emphasized the propagation of the gospel in the homeland and in the foreign fields. The members of the church have continued that emphasis, for which we are thankful to God.

A history tells what an institution has done. It also brings to light the reasons for progress, or the lack of it. One can learn much from the lessons of history, for great principles are not weakened by their use through the years. Fundamentally, what made a strong New Testament church last century will make a strong New Testament church in our day. God's eternal plan of the ages has not changed. True advancement toward the building of the Kingdom of God on earth can come only by personal commitment and loyal service wherever duty calls.

CLAUD B. BOWEN

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A Century of Service

CHAPTER I

Beginnings

1846-1861

Baptists were not among the first of the religious denominations to organize churches in Guilford County. The Lutherans organized Friedens Church in the eastern part of the county about 1745. The Friends started work in western Guilford soon thereafter. In 1775 Buffalo Presbyterian Church was organized not far from the town of Greensboro. Organized Baptist work came much later. Elias Dodson, in his report to the Beulah Association in 1846, speaks of "the great destitution in Guilford and Rockingham counties, in the first of which there is no Baptist minister or missionary Baptist church, though it is one of the largest counties in the state."

The First Presbyterian Church, organized in 1824, was the first church located in the town of Greensboro. The Methodists followed in 1830 with the organization of a church which worshipped in a building on South Elm Street. Later the church moved to West Market Street and became the West Market Street Methodist Church.

While the Baptists were late in organizing churches, they were among the first on the field. Dr. W. W. Rowe, in his *History of the Baptists of Greensboro,* makes this statement which was copied from a paper and corroborated from other sources: "In 1820, when Rev. William Paisley came to Greensboro to establish a Presbyterian church and school, there were eighteen or twenty families and only one professing Christian in the village, Major Jones Johnson, who was a Baptist." Arnett and Jackson, in their *History of Greensboro,* make this statement: "In 1819 the Reverend William D. Paisley had come to

take charge of the Greensborough Academy; and he must have been shocked to find Baptist Major Jones Johnson as the only professing Christian in the village."

Again, in his report to the Convention in 1846, Elias Dodson says: "Edenton also ought to have a preacher, nor ought Windsor, Greensborough, and Salisbury be overlooked. The great mistake with us in this state has been the neglect of the towns, especially in the middle and western parts of the state." Further, in the proceedings of the Convention in 1849 we find this statement: "At the request of the Beulah Association, Elder Elias Dodson was reappointed their missionary for twelve months. Also Dodson is requested to preach statedly in the town of Greensborough, N. C."

There seems to have been special interest in Greensboro, for in the same report of 1849 we read: "Elder J. J. James was appointed missionary in Greensborough." Rev. W. H. Eller states that Bro. James, assisted by Elder J. B. Marsh, established the first Sunday School ever organized in Guilford County. Mrs. Mary Hiatt, who was later married to Col. Payne, was the superintendent. People came from several miles in the country to attend this Sunday School. In 1850 this item appears in the Convention report: "On motion, Elder John H. Lacy was appointed a missionary of the Board to preach statedly once a month, or oftener, in the town of Greensborough—the Board agreeing to pay $50 toward his support." Again I quote from Dr. Rowe: "About 1850, Elder Elias Dodson, working under the Baptist Mission Board, came to Greensboro and found five loyal sisters meeting together and trying to keep alive a little unorganized church. He preached to them in the old courthouse which stood in the middle of the street, at the intersection of Elm and Market Streets, now known as Jefferson Square. In his report to the Baptist State Convention (1850) he said he had baptized ten converts at Greensboro. To this little handful he preached intermittently for several years." The names of the five women

were Mrs. Mary Hiatt, Mrs. Catherine Jolly, Mrs. Pattie Cole, Mrs. Mary Thomas, and Mrs. Martha Newton.

The Minutes of the Beulah Association for 1850 list Greensborough among the churches, but states that it was an arm of the Madison Church. Just how and when it became an arm of the Madison Church is not stated. Bro. W. H. Eller gives the date as 1848, though it is not listed among the churches of the Association until two years later. This was probably the "little unorganized church" to which Elder Dodson preached. This little church soon became an independent organization, for, in the Minutes of the Association for 1851, we read: "A letter was received and read from the Greensborough Church, constituted by the presbytery of the Association since the last meeting. On motion, the church was unanimously received and the right hand of fellowship extended to her delegates by the moderator." A contribution of one dollar to the Associational Fund was reported. Elder Dodson reported that he had received $4.87 from the church in 1849, and $5.75 in 1850.

At this time the Methodists had moved from their building on South Elm Street to their new location on West Market Street. Their old building was purchased by Elder Dodson, out of his own private funds, for the sum of $450, and the Baptists moved in. This building was located on the west side of South Elm Street about half way between Washington Street and Edwards Place. It was a two-story building, 30 by 40 feet. The second story, or gallery, was for the slaves. The building was later purchased from Bro. Dodson by the Beulah Association.

Some trouble, the nature of which is not revealed, seems to have developed in the church. The associational Minutes of 1852 make this statement: "A request from the Greensborough church asking that a committee be sent to the place to assist them in a difficulty in said church." The church reported thirty members that year. Elder Dodson was listed as pastor, and $5.54 had been contributed toward his support. Note how church

difficulties affect finances. The contributions had been $5.75 two years before. The committee appointed to visit the church met in Greensboro in September, 1852. A report was made to the Association the following year: "We visited the church and found the members willing to endeavor to live in harmony, and to forget all former difficulties." The membership had decreased to twenty-five.

During these years there was no resident pastor and little progress was made. The leaders in the Convention were somewhat worried about the condition. In 1852 the Board of Managers reported: "The towns of Charlotte, Wadesboro, Henderson, and Greensborough ought to have missionaries or located ministers to preach for them at least twice a month." And in 1855, Elder Dodson, in his report to the Board, said: "Many towns and villages are destitute, among them Greensborough, Salisbury," etc.

In 1856 the church was dismissed from the Beulah Association to join the Liberty Association. A membership of thirty-two was reported, and Rev. O. Churchill was listed as pastor. The same year, the Board of Managers of the Convention took this action: "On motion, Elder A. Weaver was appointed to preach in the town of Greensborough two sabbaths in the month, the Board becoming responsible to Bro. Weaver for $300, he raising all he can in his field of labor, and giving Board credit for amount raised."

Dr. Rufus Weaver, a grandson of Elder A. Weaver, speaks of him as "the founder of the First Baptist Church, of Greensboro, N. C." He says of him: "He was a forceful preacher of the old style. After he had proceeded for about half an hour in the pulpit, he began to weep copiously from his emotion, and thereafter to the end of his sermon the tears literally ran down his cheeks."

Again there was some kind of trouble in the church. At the meeting of the Association in 1857, the following action was taken: "On motion, the Association recommends the Greens-

borough church, worshipping at Cumberland, to purify themselves, and we tender the services of Elder A. Weaver, if requested, to aid in same." The church reported no pastor that year, and the membership had decreased to nineteen. Cumberland was a community just to the southwest of the town where a majority of the members of the church lived. It probably received its name from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in that section, whose building was open for the use of all denominations. Bro. W. H. Eller suggests that the trouble in the church was caused by the "Free Soil Controversy." The Free Soil political party had been organized a few years prior to this time, and was strongly anti-slavery.

In 1858 the Liberty Association took the following action: "On motion, a committee was appointed to go on the grounds, and examine into the condition of the Greensborough church and report to next association." Only fourteen members were reported that year. The following year the Minutes record the result of the committee's visit: "The committee appointed to visit and inquire into the condition of the Greensborough church report that it is extinct. Report recorded and committee discharged. On motion, it was agreed that we discontinue the name of the Greensborough church."

The report of the Board in 1859 carries this statement: "Elder John Mitchell was appointed to preach two sabbaths a month in Greensboro, the Board paying $200 for his support. Under his ministry a church has been organized in Greensboro with fifteen members." At that time Greensboro had a population of 1,400. The early records of the church give the following account of the organization:

GREENSBORO BAPTIST CHURCH
CONSTITUTED
MARCH 13TH, 1859

"According to previous appointment, a church was constituted in this place today to be known as 'The Greensboro Bap-

tist Church,' and composed of the following members: Peyton H. Bilbro, David W. Motley, Catherine Jolly, Eliza Harwood, Mary D. Gregg, Mary Hiatt, Mary E. Bilbro, Louise N. Bilbro, Mary A. Shackleford, Mary Burns.

"James Gretter, Moses Patrick, Aggie Morehead, Susan Gretter. (Since these four were placed in a separate list, it is supposed that they were Negroes. Though the Minutes of the Convention record the church as having been organized with fifteen members, only fourteen are named in the church records.)

"Elders Thos. E. Skinner, Levi Thorn, and John Mitchell composed the presbytery. The Church Covenant was read by Elder Mitchell, the charge delivered by Elder Thorn, prayer offered by Elder Skinner, and benediction by Elder Thorn."

At the meeting of the Beulah Association that same year the newly-constituted church was received into that body: "A letter was read from a newly constituted church in Greensborough, asking admission into this body; and, on motion, it was unanimously admitted into the Association as one of its constituent members." The Board of Managers of the Convention make this favorable report concerning the work: "The prospects for our cause in this place are considered encouraging. Since the constitution of the church, twenty-two have been received by letter and baptism, and the church has paid $53.00 for his (Bro. Mitchell's) services."

Dr. W. W. Rowe states that the first person baptized into the fellowship of the church was C. E. W. Hobbs, who became a distinguished teacher and minister, serving for several years as Secretary of Missions in the state of Kentucky, and Associate Secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention. Also baptized was a young woman, Nannie Buchanan, who later became the wife of Dr. H. B. Marley, and the mother of Mrs. G. P. Crutchfield and Henry Marley.

The following year, 1860, the report is still more encouraging: "Brother Mitchell preaches in Greensboro on the second

and fourth sabbaths each month. Bro. Mitchell reports that during the past year the church has had an increase of fifteen by baptism and five by letter. The church now numbers thirty-nine. The church leads a prayer meeting semi-monthly. For further encouragement we would say that Greensboro brethren have organized a Baptist School, and, though small, is regularly attended. Bro. Mitchell's little flock are in much need of a more comfortable house of worship than they now occupy."

Concerning the further progress of the church, this statement appears in the Board's report in 1861: "His (Bro. Mitchell's) labors have been greatly blessed and his heart cheered in seeing the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hands. A small Sabbath School and a weekly prayer meeting are kept up. His congregations have been generally good. He has received by baptism during the past year fourteen, by letter eight, in all twenty-two. The whole number of members is fifty-eight."

Bro. Mitchell was forced to resign the pastorate of the church in 1861 on account of the declining health of his father and mother, who were old and in need of his care. He never married. His saintly character and his Christ-like disposition won for him among his brethren the name of "The Beloved Disciple."

CHAPTER II

Struggles

1861-1874

The Greensboro Church was launched at a critical time—just before the Civil War. The years that followed were indeed years of struggle. Many of the men were in the army, and to the small band of women fell the burden of keeping the church alive.

There are no church records between the establishment of the church and the year 1873. We are dependent on what information we can find from outside sources concerning the activities of the church during those years. This information is rather meager. But from 1874 to 1885, R. L. Vernon was clerk of the church, and he kept accurate records of the proceedings.

In 1861 the church had only forty members. The following year Rev. J. B. Jackson was called to the pastorate. Under his leadership the membership increased to fifty-seven but dropped back to fifty-three the following year.

Rev. Theo. Whitfield served as pastor in 1864. He remained with the church but a short time. The membership showed further decrease, from fifty-three to fifty. However, the following year the Greensboro Church entertained the Beulah Association for the first time.

About this time, Rev. P. H. Fountain became pastor of the church, and remained with it for nearly two years, preaching only once a month. Under his ministry, the membership grew to fifty-four. The following year (1867) the church had no pastor and the membership fell to thirty-seven. The Sabbath School, if it was still functioning, made no report to the Associ-

ation. From 1868 to 1870, the church was supplied by Rev. F. H. Jones and Dr. W. B. Harrell.

In 1871, the following resolution was passed by the Beulah Association: "Resolved that the Trustees of the Association be instructed to dispose of the Baptist House of worship in Greensboro, and apply the proceeds thereof to the erection of a new house of worship for the Greensboro Baptist Church." The old building which had been purchased from the Methodists had become unsafe. The following year, the Association passed a resolution authorizing the Trustees of the Association to transfer title to the property of the Greensboro Church.

Dr. J. B. Richardson accepted the pastorate of the church in 1871. There were only forty-five names on the church roll. Under the vigorous leadership of Dr. Richardson, the church began to prosper. A letter written by him in 1904, recorded in Dr. Rowe's *History of the Baptists of Greensboro,* tells a graphic story of struggle and victory.

"Sometime during the winter of 1870 and '71, at the request of Brother W. B. Crump, I made my first visit to Greensboro. I knew no one living there then. I preached my first sermon in what was then known as Garrett's Hall, the only one in Greensboro. I had only three hearers, viz., Brother W. B. Crump and Sisters M. A. Dixon and Potts. They had, on Saturday evening, paid $3.00 for the use of said hall to hold our Sabbath service in. This sum we had to pay for every Sabbath we used it. This we did for some time. On this first visit I found that there were only about a dozen members of the church living in and around Greensboro, and they were all poor save Sister Payne (then Mrs. Hiatt) who had not then moved to Greensboro, though I think she had a home there. It was some six months or more after this visit before Sister Payne joined hands with us.

"The above three first named were the only ones who covenanted with me at first to go forward in God's strength, they agreeing to pay my railroad expenses and board bills to visit

them once a month. Our good Sister Jolly was then living; but, being an invalid, she could seldom be with us. There were one or two other sisters whose names I cannot now recall. On the edge of town Brother P. H. Bilbro and wife lived. These were all the Baptists belonging to the church I found in the town. Some six or eight lived in the country, including the families of William and Thomas Buchanan, some four or five miles away. I visited Greensboro six months before I received an invitation to visit any family outside the Baptist denomination, and (in confidence) such was the contempt in which the Baptists were held by many, I was often hissed as I walked the streets, and more than once while I was preaching.

"With my first three hearers, who had called me to the pastorate of the church, we organized a Sunday school with Sister Dixon as superintendent, also a weekly prayer meeting. With this little handful as a beginning, we unfurled our banner to the breezes of Greensboro.

"I mention the above to show the spirit dominating Sister Dixon. It was no idle task she assumed when she faced the frowns heaped upon the Baptist cause in that day, being a lady of high culture and refinement, and reared in Richmond, Virginia, where the Baptists were so strong and predominant. Brother W. B. Crump, a cobbler, watchman at the railroad station, and a wage earner, was the humble supporter of Sister Dixon, and the only brother to stand by her side at this period of the situation. With mine own eyes I have seen Sister Dixon on the way to her Sabbath school, wading through snow six or eight inches deep, with a babe in her arms and leading another child by the hand, going thus for a quarter of a mile before the sidewalks had been cleared of snow. Such faithfulness justly inspired her pastor. Often I would say, 'Sister, how can you face such opposition, and struggle on so faithfully?' Her reply invariably was, 'Thus my Savior led. I am trying to follow Him, and I am happy in the work!'

"Had we no house of worship at that time? Yes, the church

owned a little old brick building on South Elm Street, but it was considered unsafe for services. It was an old dilapidated building bought by the Baptists, I think, before the Civil War, and we could not use it.

"Under the leadership of Sister Dixon we gathered a nucleus —a few faithful ones—and set out to build a new house.

"About this time Sister Hiatt married Col. John Payne and settled in Greensboro and, being an ardent Baptist, though of a Methodist family, she at once came to the side of Sister Dixon. Different in temperament and training, they yet became such co-workers as but few pastors have ever known in pioneer work. Soon Sister Eliza Hillyard, a sister of Mrs. Dixon, joined them. These sisters made a trio of most consecrated servants of Jesus. In their mission to rebuild Zion's wall, no quarrying work was too menial for their hands.

"Then, about this time, the Lord gave us a young brother, the first in our number, who proved to be a worthy worker in our great struggle. He at once became as the right hand of his pastor. His name was R. L. Vernon.

"It was inspiring to the weakest to see this band, with the new members coming in, facing difficulties apparently insurmountable. Sisters Dixon and Payne leading, they went to work with a spirit conscious of victory, and with that faith that removes mountains.

"These leaders often said to their pastor, 'Toil on, victory is ours; we feel it, we know it. Some day the Master will give us great power in His service.' At this far away day I can see this Gideon's Band going into the enemy's camp with a shout of victory.

"One such attack of theirs I shall never forget. It was on this wise: We had our new house so nearly completed that we were holding services in it; but there was a note against us for $700.00 in the bank, secured by a mortgage on our house and lot. One Saturday we were notified that our note would go to protest the following Monday. The pastor was told by treasurer R. L.

Vernon that there was only $150.00 in the treasury to meet it. On Sunday our little band met, laboring under the heavy burden. They had, as they thought, done all they could to pay off a previous amount. The bank said that if we would pay $300.00 on Monday they would extend the balance of the payment sixty days, they still to hold the mortgage as security.

"After a sermon to about twenty hearers, of whom sixteen were members, the leaders of the band said, 'Let us try!' and to the struggle they went, Sisters Dixon and Payne leading. Their efforts made and money counted, they still lacked $60.00 of having the necessary $300.00.

"Silence reigned for a few minutes; silent prayers ascended to the Throne of Grace, and tears were seen in many eyes. Sister Payne broke the heavy suspense by saying, 'This house shall not be sold.' Sister Dixon replied, 'Never! Never!' Brother Vernon repeated the echo. So to their second effort they hurried, when lo! we had $500.00 to meet the note.

"The next morning at 9 a.m. we were at the bank. It had been said that the $300.00 required could not be raised, and that the church must go under the hammer. This is what people had hoped for. The bank teller counted the $500.00 in great astonishment, asking, 'Where did you get all this money?' The answer was readily given that the little weak Baptist people had raised every cent of it. The result was that the mortgage was handed over to us, and all the time we wished was given us to pay the remaining $200.00 without interest.

"In this great victory Brother Vernon and Sisters Payne and Dixon led us. Let me say in conclusion that in all these efforts to establish our cause in Greensboro, to build and furnish our church, these noble sisters never resorted to festivals and like means to raise money. They relied on the helping power of God to move the people to come to His help against the mighty. Never in all my forty years (spent mostly in pioneer work) have I seen and known such workers. Others, their equals or superiors, there may have been, but it has not been my fortune to

meet them. In our earthly feelings, Heaven is more attractive as we think of the trio in the higher service they loved so much on earth."

Dr. Richardson was himself a liberal giver and had a worthy part in the efforts described in his letter. In addition to that, he had wide acquaintance with the Baptists of the state whom he solicited for help in building the Greensboro church. They responded by contributing over $1700.00. During the erection of the building the church worshipped in Odd Fellows' Hall.

On the first Sunday in April, 1873, the church adopted sixteen rules of order by which the members were to be governed, and the affairs of the church conducted. Not all of these rules can be recorded here, but some of them are of special interest.

Rule three, "It shall be the duty of each member to attend all church conferences at the appointed hour."

Rule four, "Six members, including the pastor, or one deacon, shall constitute a quorum to transact business."

Rule six, "Any male member who shall fail to attend regular conference will be expected to render at the next conference a satisfactory excuse for such absence."

Rule nine, "Every matter shall be discussed with gravity and modesty, and with sincere desire for the truth."

Rule fourteen, "No member shall absent himself during church conference without permission of the moderator."

A strict church discipline was maintained. At almost every church conference, one or more of the members were called before the church to answer charges. The charges usually were for non-attendance, non-support, or disorderly conduct.

In some of these meetings considerable feeling was aroused, and rather strong language was used. On one occasion one of the women of the congregation was called to account for conduct unworthy of a Christian. After some discussion of the charges against her, she arose and informed the group that they were all just a bunch of ignoramuses.

In 1874 Dr. Richardson resigned the pastorate of the church

to become Corresponding Secretary of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention.

CHAPTER III

Patient Perseverance

1875-1884

Following the resignation of Dr. Richardson, the church experienced some difficulty in securing a successor. A call was extended to three men, but they declined. Dr. Thomas Hume, a Baptist minister who was head of the English Department of the University at Chapel Hill, acted as supply pastor. Finally, in December, 1875, Rev. S. F. Conrad was called and served the church for a little over a year. His salary was $500, $200 of which was contributed by the State Board of Missions.

The church seems to have had no adequate financial plan. Members were called on to make voluntary pledges for the support of the church, but these were seldom sufficient to meet the expenses. When debts accumulated, a committee was appointed to try to raise sufficient funds with which to pay these debts. Often the Ladies' Aid Society was called upon to give an oyster supper to raise funds.

During Brother Conrad's pastorate, the following financial plan was adopted:

"We, the members of the Greensboro Baptist Church, recognizing the advantages of systematic benevolence, and believing the Scriptures to teach the same, do adopt the following Financial Plan, to take effect from the time of its adoption, and be subject to such alterations and changes as the church in conference may at any time see proper to make.

I. That each member be required to voluntarily state how much they will give per week for Church Expenses and Pastor's Salary, the amount with name of giver to be placed on a list by the treasurer of the Church.

II. That a collection be taken up every Lord's day, during

the morning service, for these two objects, and that the amount given by each member of the Church be placed in an envelope for the purpose, with the name of the giver, and the amount given, printed or written on the back of same, and said amounts to be credited to the giver by the treasurer of the Church.

III. That each member, in case of failure to make their weekly contributions, be required to pay the same at the end of the month.

IV. That all money contributed by the congregation at large, and unnamed by the giver, be applied to the above named objects, viz: Church Expenses and Pastor's Salary, except in cases otherwise ordered by the church.

V. That a collection be taken up after every observance of the Lord's Supper, and the fund thus collected be known as the Relief Fund of the Church, to be held by the treasurer and used by the Deacons as necessity may require.

VI. That four public collections be taken up during the year for the following objects: Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Domestic Missions, and Ministerial Education. The year to be divided into four quarters, one quarter to each object. The collections for these objects to be at the end of each quarter, as follows:

First—Foreign Missions.
Second—Home Missions.
Third—Domestic Missions.
Fourth—Ministerial Education.

During each quarter the members are requested to use the mite boxes, and return them at the quarterly collection.

VII. That the treasurer be required to make payment of Church Expenses and Pastor's Salary at the end of each month.

VIII. Any church member failing to comply with these regulations shall be amenable to the Church and subject to such action as it may deem prudent to take.

During Bro. Conrad's pastorate an arm of the church was established at Buchanan's School House, a few miles east of

Greensboro. The pastor preached at this point the third Sunday in each month, and members received there were recognized as members of the Greensboro church. The following year, May, 1877, nineteen members of the church were granted letters of dismission to form an independent church at Buchanan's School House. This church later erected a building about a quarter of a mile from what is now Highway 70. This organization did not prove to be permanent. It finally disbanded and the members united with other churches. However, in more recent years, the church was revived through the efforts of Rev. J. B. Clifton. Under his leadership, the church has grown and prospered. Two other churches have been organized by the Buchanan church.

In March, 1877, Bro. Conrad resigned the pastorate, and Dr. W. R. Gwaltney was called to preach one Sunday in each month "at a salary of $150.00 per year and board." Bro. Gwaltney was also pastor in Winston. The Beulah Association met with the Greensboro church that year for the second time. Bro. Gwaltney remained with the church but a short time, resigning in September to accept a pastorate in Raleigh.

While the church was without a pastor, the need was felt for a revival. In those days the church went into such an effort whole-heartedly. Rev. J. W. Fackler, of Georgia, was invited to conduct the revival, and brethren H. Petty of Virginia, A. C. Dixon of Chapel Hill, and A. E. Kitchen were invited to assist him. The meeting continued for nearly a month, and proved to be a gracious season of refreshing.

Following this meeting, the church extended a call to Rev. H. Petty to become pastor. This proved to be the shortest pastorate of all, terminating in Bro. Petty's resignation in June of the same year. Living, as he did, in Virginia, he realized that he could not do the work that was needed. Following his resignation, he wrote a letter to the Editor of the Biblical Recorder in which he said:

"Permit me to say a word or two in behalf of the Greensboro

church, for though I have resigned the charge of it, I feel a deep interest in its welfare. It has been called to pass through many and sore trials, and the wonder is that it exists at all. Some of the best men and women I know are members of that church. They have struggled for years with difficulties that seemed sometimes ready to crush them, but still the church lives and will live. There is a bright future yea, I believe, for the Greensboro Baptist church. Let the State Board lend a helping hand, put a good man there, and the cause, I believe, will flourish."

But the State Board did not always take an optimistic view of the situation in Greensboro. Many years ago, one of the older men in the denomination told the writer that, at a meeting of the Board, when applications for help were being considered, the application of the Greensboro church came up. One member of the Board arose and said: "Greensboro never has done anything, and never will; I move that we do not grant this application." The motion was discussed, and it was finally agreed to give Greensboro another chance. We are reminded of the words of the prophet, "Despise not the day of small things." Today the Greensboro church contributes to the Co-operative Program more than ten times as much in one year as the Board appropriated to the church over a period of more than twenty-five years.

On June 27, 1878, the church called Rev. Trezvant Harrison, of Apex, N. C., at a salary of $500, which was augmented by an appropriation from the State Mission Board. The church had a membership of eighty-two, and reported a library of 250 volumes. Bro. Harrison remained with the church until January, 1880.

Again the church experienced some difficulty in securing a pastor. Three men were called, and declined. For more than a year the church was without a pastor. It was the custom at that time to call a pastor for just one year. At the end of the year he might be called for another year, or some other man might be called. Such a custom might well make a man hesitate about accepting the pastorate.

Rev. E. F. Baldwin was called in June, 1881, at a salary of $525, the State Mission Board contributing an additional $300. During his pastorate, the church enjoyed a period of prosperity. In one year, 1882, fourteen members were received by letter, and twenty on profession of faith. This brought the membership up to 128, the first time it had ever passed one hundred. Extensive repairs were made to the church building. The Ladies' Aid Society provided a new carpet. And these items appear in the church minutes: "Church extended thanks to Sisters Baldwin and Bonor for the nice organ that had recently been put in the church;" "Elder E. F. Baldwin presented the church a handsome communion set and two table cloths." About this time, we find this item also: "Bro. Stowe said he thought it was time the church was taking some steps to secure a lot with a view to erecting a church in the future." All of these things indicate that the church was perhaps in the most prosperous condition in its history.

The spiritual side, however, was not neglected. "In January, 1883, our pastor, aided by Dr. W. A. Nelson, of Shelby, N. C., commenced a series of meetings which continued several weeks. In these meetings Bro. Nelson preached faithfully the gospel, which was followed by a gracious revival of the church and the conversion of many precious souls." Among those who were received for baptism was Rufus Weaver, son of P. D. Weaver, who had an important part in the early history of the church. Rufus Weaver later became one of the leading ministers and educators in the Southern Baptist Convention. He was perhaps the first minister to go from the Greensboro church.

I quote from Dr. Rowe's History: "On December 16th, 1883, the resignation of Bro. Baldwin was read. He asked to be freed from this work to enter on what he considered to be a greater work for the Master in the foreign field. During Bro. Baldwin's absence the pulpit was supplied by Rev. J. M. Batcheldor.

"Brother Baldwin returning from Algeria, N. Africa, after a tour of inspection of that country, and seeing its needs, decided

to accept the work in that field under an English mission board of which Hon. H. Grattan Guinness was secretary. Returning to N. Africa, he located in Tangier, Morocco. There was a public leave-taking of Bro. Baldwin and his family, in which the pastors of different churches participated. This farewell service was held at the old West Market Street Methodist Church, at which time this church had the largest auditorium in the place."

The church faced the usual difficulty in getting a permanent pastor. Instead of following the custom of today of getting some assurance that a man will accept the work before a call is extended, the church proceeded to call one man after another, only to have them refuse. Then they were led to Dr. W. R. Gwaltney, who had just resigned the pastorate of the Second Baptist Church of Raleigh. He was called in November, 1884, and entered upon his work the following January. He was promised a salary of $1,200, of which the church was to pay $700, the State Board $400, and some brethren in Raleigh agreed to contribute $100. The membership of the church was 115, and the Sunday School had an enrollment of 178.

Mrs. K. C. Menzies, a daughter of Dr. Gwaltney who now lives in Hickory, N. C., gives this item from her father's diary at the close of 1885: "This is a hard field for Baptists, but with the truth as it is in Christ and the everlasting promise of God, we feel assured of success, although the opposition to immersion is stronger than in any place I have ever known."

Brother R. L. Vernon had served the church as clerk for the past twelve years, keeping a neat and accurate account of the proceedings. He requested to be relieved of the duties of this office, and Dr. W. W. Rowe was elected to succeed him, and continued to serve in this capacity for fourteen years. He, too, kept accurate minutes. He not only recorded the history of those years, but helped to make it. We are deeply indebted to him and his *History of the Baptists of Greensboro* for much of the information we have concerning the activities of the church through the years.

CHAPTER IV

Shadows and Sunshine

1885-1890

With the coming of Dr. Gwaltney as pastor the future looked bright. At a business meeting of the church early in July, 1885, the pastor appointed a committee "to attend to repairing the front of the church." The following Sunday misfortune struck; at least, it seemed like misfortune at the time, but proved to be a blessing in the end. This notice appears in the records of the church: "At about 4:30 a.m., Sunday, July 6th, 1885, the church was entirely destroyed by fire; no insurance."

Most of the furnishings were saved. Bro. Gwaltney made a special effort to rescue the pulpit Bible and his baptismal suit from the flames. The large brass key to the old building and one of the pulpit chairs are now in possession of the church. Dr. Rowe gives the following description of the scene:

"The general fire alarm was at that time given (by someone appointed for the purpose) by pulling a separate rope attached to a tapper on the courthouse bell, the operator tapping a certain number of strokes to indicate the ward in which the fire was. We heard it ring for the fourth ward, and as our fire-fighting equipment was very inadequate, all within sound who could go rushed to the scene of the fire. We found Mr. John W. Wharton's general store — a long frame building — ablaze and past saving. The store was situated right adjoining our church building. In a very short time we saw that it was impossible to save this building, so we made every effort to save the church. Ladders were placed and soon scaled by some of the most agile young men. The writer remembers four of the young men of the church who were the first to go to the roof and help form

the bucket brigade. These were (beside the writer) Lee Browder, Martin Dixon, and John Thomas. These young men fought the fire until it was seen that the building was doomed, and their position became perilous. In the meantime others had removed all the church furniture, seats, secretary's desk, the new organ, communion set and new carpet. Hot, tired, and almost in despair, Brother Gwaltney and quite a number of his members met at a little distance from the crowd, who still lingered about the burning building, and commended us for doing our best to save the church and its contents. He stated that we had been kindly offered the use (temporarily) of the Y.M.C.A. rooms (located in the Vernon Building on South Elm Street), and that we would hold our Sunday morning service there at 11 o'clock. After a well-earned rest we assembled in this hall. It was pitiful to see the look of hopelessness upon the faces of our faithful little band as they talked one with another about our loss. But soon Bro. Gwaltney arrived and, amid the silence, he began to tell us that a Divine Power had permitted this seeming calamity to happen, and that he for one was willing to bow before the One who doeth all things well, and say, 'Not our will, but thine be done.' There were several fervent prayers offered for Divine comfort and guidance. Just at this time a note was handed Brother Gwaltney and, after hastily reading it, we knew the message was one of good cheer. Here is what he, in substance, read:

Rev. W. R. Gwaltney,

DEAR SIR: I just passed by the spot where your little church stood, and my heart was singularly stirred. I want to be the first to give a substantial token of my sympathy.

Your friend and well-wisher,
DAVID SCHENCK

"The note was accompanied by a substantial check. The gift was the first gleam of hope that came to our stricken people, and we took it as a direct indication that the Lord wanted us to 'carry on the work that He had established, and to achieve

greater things than had ever before been accomplished.' We could not help but feel that the gift from this big, public-spirited man was inspired of God.

"It became manifest that we had chosen wisely in calling Brother Gwaltney as our pastor. No man could have been better fitted at this crisis to inspire the efforts of our little band. We settled down temporarily (to await further indications of the Lord) in what was then known as Bogart's Hall, where we moved our rescued church furniture."

Then began the task of rebuilding. In August a building committee was appointed consisting of R. W. Brooks, R. L. Vernon, and J. A. Dodson. This committee was to be enlarged if it was deemed necessary. Bro. R. L. Vernon was elected treasurer of the building fund. The committee made a thorough study of the situation and recommended to the church that the old lot on South Elm Street be sold, and that a lot on the corner of West Washington and Green Streets be purchased. The church approved this recommendation, and the committee was authorized to proceed. Accordingly, the old lot, together with the brick, was sold to Mr. W. P. Wharton for $2,000.00, and the lot on West Washington Street was purchased for the same amount from Miss Minnie Morehead. This lot had a frontage of 154½ feet on Washington Street, and extended back 180 feet on Green Street.

The church now had a beautiful location, but no money with which to build. In previous years the church had carried insurance on their building, but it had been allowed to lapse, so they had nothing with which to start. Three sources from which to secure funds were open to them: contributions by the members of the church, gifts from friends throughout the state, and the sale of part of the new lot. The members made liberal pledges, the pastor was released for part time that he might travel over the state soliciting funds, and sixty-five feet of the lot facing on West Washington Street was sold. In addition to these efforts, an excursion to Washington was arranged by the church for the

benefit of the church building. Just how much was raised through these efforts is not recorded. Friends from the outside must have given rather liberally, for the church passed a motion extending "thanks to Bro. Sydney Lee of Caswell for donating $200 for our church building."

The contract for the new building was let to Thomas Woodroffe in July, 1886, just one year after the loss of the old building by fire. But financial difficulties were not yet settled. On August 4th, at a conference of the church, "Bro. Gwaltney suggested that a special meeting be held for seeking the Lord's blessings upon the church building, the work now burdening the hearts of the people."

The work on the new building proceeded satisfactorily. In April, 1887, the treasurer reported that it would be necessary to incur a debt of $600 in order to get the new church ready for occupancy. The church voted its approval. The latter part of the month the chairman of the building committee reported that the building was so nearly completed that the church could occupy it. They voted unanimously to move in at once. The building was not yet finished, so 100 chairs were ordered from Thomasville at a cost of $56.00. The debt of $600.00 was paid, and the building dedicated May 15, 1887. The name was changed from the Greensboro Baptist Church to the West Washington Street Baptist Church.

The Baptists now had one of the most beautiful buildings in the city. Dr. Geo. W. Paschal, who, as a young man, was living in Greensboro at that time, has this to say about the attitude of some of the people of Greensboro toward the Baptists: "When it became evident that the Baptists were building a church house of worship that would be second to none in Greensboro, great resentment arose among some who did not love the Baptists." He further says: "They were called the 'despised Baptists,' and people were warned against the seductive influence of the pastor."

It is interesting to note this item in the church records: "Bro.

G. W. Paschal received as a candidate for baptism Sunday morning, April 10th, 1887." The following Sunday afternoon he, along with several others, was baptized. Among the "several others" were Flora Burgess, who was later married to C. S. Watson, and Maud Marley, who became Mrs. G. P. Crutchfield. This was the first baptismal service in the new church building. As the pews had not been placed in the building, the congregation stood while Dr. Gwaltney baptized the candidates. A letter from Dr. Paschal shortly before his death had this to say about his Christian experience: "With fear and trembling, lest I be rejected, I walked down the aisle of Bogart Hall and asked for baptism, and was unanimously accepted. The day I was baptized was the happiest day of my life. I pity all and everyone who do not have a memory of the day and the circumstances of their baptism."

The Baptist State Convention met in Greensboro for the first time in November, 1888. Of this convention Mrs. K. C. Menzies, of Hickory, N. C., a daughter of Dr. Gwaltney, has this to say: "The most impressive I have ever attended. A farewell service for missionaries, who were to be sent out in a few weeks, was held. These missionaries were Dr. and Mrs. R. T. Bryan, Dr. and Mrs. D. W. Herring, Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Brittain, and others whom I do not recall."

Following the Convention, the church entered upon a season of revival. Rev. R. Vandeventer came first, and laid the foundation. Then came Dr. J. L. White. Under his preaching a gracious revival was experienced, with more than one hundred professions of faith, among them some of the most substantial citizens.

The church also extended a helping hand to other sections of the town. In east Greensboro, not far from where Bennett College now stands, there was a cotton mill owned by Dr. Benbow. There were also several other small industries in that section. On May 6th, 1887, Mr. S. S. Brown donated a lot for a mission chapel. It was found that a small building could be erected for

$200.00. The money was raised and the building constructed. Under the leadership of Bro. R. L. Brooks, a group of workers organized a Sunday School which grew and prospered for a few years. Then industries developed in other sections of the town, and the people moved from this neighborhood. This made it advisable to discontinue the mission.

The work of foreign missions was not neglected either. There was a strong missionary spirit in the church, especially among the women. A missionary society was flourishing long before the Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention was organized. Besides the Woman's Missionary Society, there was an organization for young women. Mrs. Matthew Yates, missionary in China, wrote the following letter from Shanghai to this organization:

"When I was young, there were no such societies as yours. Nobody thought that girls could help send the gospel to China or other heathen lands. My good uncle took me regularly to the 'Concert of Prayer for Missions,' and always put a piece of silver in my hand for me to drop into the plate; but he never taught me to earn or save my money for missions. I am sure that it would have gladdened his heart could he have known then that one day his niece would be a missionary. But neither of us dreamed of such a thing when I was a girl in Greensboro."

Before her marriage to Matthew T. Yates, the great missionary from North Carolina to China, Mrs. Yates was Eliza Moring. As a girl, she spent several years in Greensboro in the home of her uncle, Christopher Moring, and attended the Edgeworth Female Seminary, located at the corner of West Market and Edgeworth Streets.

In 1888, in addition to his duties as church clerk, Dr. Rowe was elected church treasurer. Dr. Rowe accepted on the following conditions:

1. That the deacons and finance committee lend all aid in their power devising ways and means, and assisting treasurer to collect amounts pledged promptly when due.

2. That the members aid by making prompt payments, and that said payments in every instance be weekly.

3. That the treasurer be not expected to supplement from his own funds when the treasury is empty.

4. That no moneys be paid for one object that have been subscribed or contributed to another.

On October 11th, 1889, a resolution was passed authorizing the trustees of the church to sell ten feet on the rear of the church lot to J. B. Fields for $100.00. The chairman of the building committee stated that this would about clear the balance of the debt on furnace, seating, etc.

On August 1st, 1890, Dr. Gwaltney offered his resignation as pastor of the church that he might accept a call to the church at Wake Forest, and to become secretary of the Ministerial Education Board. This resignation was accepted with regret to take effect September 1st. During the latter part of Dr. Gwaltney's pastorate the church became self-sustaining, thus relieving the State Mission Board of further financial aid.

CHAPTER V

Growth and Expansion

1890-1902

Following the resignation of Dr. Gwaltney, Rev. W. B. Wingate of Wake Forest was called, and entered upon his work November 2, 1890. Bro. Wingate was the son of Dr. W. M. Wingate, one of the Baptist leaders in the state, and for twenty-five years was President of Wake Forest College.

The work prospered under the leadership of Bro. Wingate, though one of the chief difficulties was financial. There was no wealth in the church. Indeed, a majority of the members were poor. On February 24th, 1892, a special meeting of the members was called to consider the financial condition of the church. The Minutes contain this record: "Pledges for 1892 ran $147.00 short of amount necessary for pastor's salary, leaving nothing for incidentals and associational objects, and we were due on back salary for 1891, and for incidental expenses and insurance on church, $206.17."

In April of that year, Bro. Wingate offered his resignation, in which he stated that he felt that he ought to retire from the ministry and re-enter business life. A call was extended to Rev. C. A. G. Thomas in August of that year. He was a strong preacher and large congregations attended the services of the church. During his pastorate Rev. Rufus Weaver, grandson of Elder Amos Weaver, one of the early pastors of the church, was ordained to the gospel ministry.

The church was still having trouble in collecting pledges. According to the Minutes of November, 1892, the following action was taken: "Every member of the church failing to give a reasonable excuse to the treasurer or finance committee for not

paying their pledges for the year shall have their names read out before the membership at the last conference of the year." This action was later rescinded as being in conflict with the Church Manual. In spite of all efforts, a yearly deficit was reported.

In May, 1894, the church, at the suggestion of the pastor, issued a call to other Baptist churches within twenty-five or thirty miles of Greensboro to meet in Greensboro the following October for the purpose of forming a new association. Four churches responded by sending delegates to the meeting, Reidsville, Liberty, Buchanan, and Summerfield. These, together with the Greensboro church, entered into an organization which was named the Piedmont Association. This organization grew rather rapidly, new churches being received each year.

Bro. Thomas resigned the pastorate of the church in July, 1895, to accept a call to the First Baptist Church of Fayetteville, N. C. The following September, Bro. Livingston Johnson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lumberton, N. C., was called. With the coming of Bro. Johnson and his devoted wife, the church entered upon a period of peace and spiritual progress. The membership was 214, and the Sunday School, with Bro. Geo. W. White as superintendent, had an attendance of 200.

Dr. Rowe has this to say about the life and work of Bro. Johnson: "Under his ministry the church was placed upon a higher spiritual plane than we know it had ever enjoyed since the writer's connection with it: modest, unassuming, showing the spirit of his great Master in his daily walk and conversation, this simple sincerity making him beloved not only by his own people but by those of other denominations. During Dr. Johnson's ministry denominational prejudices were nearer to being broken down than at any other period in Greensboro's history."

Mrs. Johnson was a worthy helper in every endeavor. She was known as a woman who lived close to God, and whose prayers reached the throne of grace. It is said that on one occasion she went into a Greensboro store to ask for a donation of goods for

some worthy cause. The proprietor told her he didn't think they could make a donation at that time. "All right," said Mrs. Johnson, "I'll pray about it." "No," said the proprietor, "take the goods now; we don't want you praying about it."

Again I quote from Dr. Rowe: "It has been said that our people were at this time living very close to God, during the six years Brother Johnson was our pastor. One summer there was a long drought, and people were beginning to pray earnestly for rain. We met as usual at the mid-week prayer meeting, and besought the Lord no longer to withhold the rain that was in His power to shower upon the parched earth. That night an abundant shower fell, and the shower was followed by a good season of rain."

Concerning his pastorate in Greensboro Dr. Johnson had this to say: "I think those days were the happiest of my life."

The writer of these lines gives expression to his affection for this good man and his wife. At his ordination in Statesville in 1903, Dr. Johnson preached the ordination sermon. At his marriage in Oxford in 1908, Dr. Johnson performed the ceremony.

In 1895, the Greensboro church entertained the Baptist State Convention for the second time. Following the meeting of the Convention, the church entered upon a session of revival, with Dr. J. F. Love, later to become Corresponding Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, as the visiting minister. During this meeting, Mrs. Foy J. Farmer, eldest daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Johnson, then a little girl eleven years old, was converted, and, a little later, was baptized by her father.

Mrs. Farmer has this to say about the years spent in Greensboro: "Many happy memories come to me as I think of the years we lived in Greensboro, from my seventh year till my thirteenth. The church building on West Washington Street was to my eyes the epitome of magnificence; the stained glass windows, the first I had ever seen, were beautiful beyond telling.

"Mrs. J. C. Murchison gathered the young girls of the church into a missionary organization. It was called the 'Busy Bee

Band,' and was one of the forerunners of the Girls' Auxiliary. We met in Mrs. Murchison's beautiful home. We learned how to conduct meetings, something about our mission work, how to pray for missionaries and natives. Mrs. Will Matthews organized the boys into a Boys' Band, one of the earliest forerunners of Royal Ambassadors.

"The choir sat on an elevated platform to the minister's right. None of the members were paid except the organist, Mrs. Elliott, who I think received a small salary. The organ had to be pumped by hand, a task which fell to the colored sexton. One Sunday he asked to be allowed to go to his own church because, he said, 'I like to hear some real preaching now and then.' "

During Dr. Johnson's pastorate, other sections of the town were not neglected. Two new churches were organized, one in the northern section, and the other in the southern. Concerning the first, Dr. Rowe gives the following account:

"In the spring of 1896 the Cone Manufacturing Company began the erection of the first of their big mills at Proximity. Realizing what a wonderful thing the coming of these enterprises meant for Greensboro and the different denominational causes, we found that Mr. Caesar Cone was willing to donate a site for our new mission chapel within view of the new mill on Cherry Street, Proximity. Brother Johnson asked as many of our members as were willing to go out there one bright Sunday afternoon in May, to organize a Sunday School. Quite a number responded, and we met with a Brother W. R. Andrews under a big oak tree, and there convenanted to take up this promising work for the Master. That afternoon we decided to organize a Sunday School and, in the meantime, try to find a temporary place for meeting. Mr. Cone let us use an old log house far out on Church Street until we could build our chapel. Here the first Baptist Sunday School was organized, and the writer had the honor of being the first superintendent.

"Then came a canvass for funds to erect a chapel to meet the needs of the incoming people. It was decided to build a more

elaborate building than for any mission work we had heretofore undertaken. Everything was done systematically; Brother Andrew Brooks became our contractor, and the writer, the treasurer of the building fund. During the summer the building was erected, and we held our first service in the late fall in our new mission chapel, which was well-filled for the occasion."

On April 17th, 1897, a church was organized with twenty charter members, six of whom were from the West Washington Street Church. Rev. G. L. Merrill was called as the first pastor, and W. H. Eller was elected church clerk. With the growth of the village, it was deemed advisable to move the church to a more central location. Accordingly, the chapel was moved to Walnut Street, and the name of the church changed from Cherry Street Chapel to the Walnut Street Baptist Church. As the congregation grew, the building was remodeled and enlarged. Finally it was decided to erect a new building at a different location. This resulted in the present building known as Eller Memorial Baptist Church, named in honor of Rev. W. H. Eller who had taken a leading part in the organization of this church, and many others in and around Greensboro.

Mention should be made of the generosity of the Cone Industries to the churches established in the villages which they owned and controlled. They not only gave lots on which church buildings were erected, but furnished homes for the pastors and contributed liberally toward their salaries. At one time they contributed four dollars for every dollar a church raised toward a new building.

The second area in which new work was started was in South Greensboro. Bro. W. H. Eller gives the following account of this effort:

"In June, 1897, Brethren Livingston Johnson, R. W. Brooks, W. H. Eller, and W. S. Kivett met at a vacant store building on South Elm Street and organized a Sunday School, electing the following officers: W. F. Clarida, superintendent, W. S. Kivett,

secretary. With songs of praise, earnest prayer, and reading of the Scriptures, we launched a Sunday School in South Greensboro, realizing that it was a humble beginning of the great work that has been accomplished by our Asheboro Street Church. There were present at the inception of this work, Dr. Johnson, Rev. G. L. Merrill, Rev. Rufus Weaver, Mrs. P. G. Welch, Mrs. Whitt R. Stone, Mrs. W. H. Matthews, and about seventy others. (Mrs. Farmer tells of how she went with her father that afternoon, and of how they sat on boxes around the room.)

"On July 2nd, 1899, the church was organized in a little store building on South Elm Street, and was called the South Elm Street Baptist Church. There were seven charter members. On July 10th, Rev. J. A. Hackney was called as pastor.

"In 1900 a small church building a short distance in the country was purchased and moved to a lot on East Whittington Street. The name of the church was then changed to Southside Baptist Church.

"In the summer of 1906 the church building was moved to a suitable lot on Asheboro Street and the name was changed to Asheboro Street Baptist Church."

In the years that followed, additional land was purchased and new buildings were erected to take care of the growing work. Today it is one of the strong and active churches of the city.

In the meantime, the West Washington Street Church had outgrown its building. More space was needed for the Sunday School. Led by R. W. Brooks and his brother A. F. Brooks, who contributed much time and labor, the church built an addition on the rear of the church building. Work was held up from time to time for lack of funds, but it was finally completed, free of debt, and the Sunday School experienced rapid growth.

A beautiful stained glass window was placed in the church by Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Vernon as a memorial to their eldest son Robert, who had died of typhoid fever while he was taking a business course in a northern school. When, a few years later,

the church moved to a new location on West Market Street, this window was placed in the new building.

At the meeting of the Baptist State Convention in Raleigh in 1900 Dr. Johnson was elected Corresponding Secretary of the Convention. It was a hard decision for him to make, to leave a church which he loved and which loved him, but he felt led of the Lord to accept the position to which he had been called. To his wife in Greensboro he sent the following telegram: "Unanimously elected Secretary. My heart bleeds." Much to the sorrow of his congregation, he offered his resignation to take effect the following January.

The church appointed the deacons, with Bro. Lee H. Battle and Judge Spencer B. Adams, a committee to select and recommend a pastor. On February 10th, 1901, the committee recommended that the church call Bro. W. Carey Newton, then pastor of the First Baptist Church of Goldsboro, N. C., as pastor. A unanimous call was extended, and Bro. Newton came to the church the first of March.

Bro. Newton's pastorate was short, lasting about two years, but it was intensive. He had a strong evangelistic and missionary passion which he imparted to the church. For the first time in its history, the church membership passed the 300 mark, reaching 325. A motion was made and carried that the Sunday School take a special offering for missions once a month. Dr. Rowe makes this statement: "At this time our finances were in the hands of a committee whose perfect system of collection for missions and home expenses kept the church entirely out of debt, a condition never before known in its history."

The church owned a lot in Gibsonville which it agreed to deed to the Baptist church of that place, provided the Gibsonville church would erect a suitable house of worship on it. The condition was met and the transfer was made.

The strictness with which church discipline was enforced is shown by the following resolution adopted by the deacons and approved by the church:

"Viewing with alarm the growing evils which surround our church and city, we as deacons and spiritual committee intend to see in the future that our Manual is strictly enforced with regard to all members walking disorderly, and that we will especially recommend that those sections relating to card playing, dancing, circus and theatre going receive especial consideration.

"That after prayerfully reasoning with any member or members who persist in attending any of the above mentioned amusements, we shall recommend the same to the church for discipline."

Bro. Newton, feeling that God was calling him to go as a missionary, presented himself to the Foreign Mission Board, but was rejected for lack of funds. At the meeting of the Piedmont Association in High Point, 1902, Bro. Newton made such an earnest plea that the Association agreed to pay one year's salary for him and his family. The Greensboro church took the lead, contributing $500.00 of the amount. On October 1st, 1902, Bro. Newton read his resignation to the church: "Believing that I am called of God to preach the gospel to those who have it not, I resign the pastoral care of your church to take effect at a time agreed upon by the pulpit committee. Thank God for your fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now."

The deacons, together with Brethren C. E. Holton, M. W. Thompson, and Howard Gardner, were appointed a committee to recommend a pastor. Bro. Newton remained with the church until January, 1903. He and his wife retained their membership in the church during the many years they served in China. In 1927 the church assumed the entire support of Bro. Newton and his family, which continued until the time of his retirement.

On October 29th, 1902, the following resolution was passed by the church: "That the name of the church be changed from Washington Street Baptist Church to the First Baptist Church."

CHAPTER VI

Enlargement

1903-1910

Following the resignation and departure of Bro. Newton, the church was without a pastor for several months. In February, 1903, Dr. Henry W. Battle, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Petersburg, Va., was called and came to the church in March. The salary was $2,000.00, the highest the church had ever paid. A home for the pastor was purchased on West Washington Street at a cost of between three and four thousand dollars.

In his short history of the church, Bro. A. W. Cooke describes Dr. Battle as "a man of eloquence, piety, ability and genuine Christianity." He further says: "His coming ushers in the brightest prospects the church has ever known, and already is manifest a spiritual quickening and fuller Christian life."

Under Dr. Battle's ministry, the church experienced a healthy growth. By 1905 the membership had increased to 405. The following year the total gifts of the church passed $5,000.00 for the first time, reaching $6,648.00.

It had become evident that the growing church would have to provide larger physical facilities. In the latter part of 1905, a committee, consisting of the trustees of the church, M. W. Thompson, C. E. Holton, and Lee H. Battle, was appointed to consider the advisability of a change in the location of the church. The committee reported, recommending that the church purchase the lot on the corner of West Market and North Eugene Streets at a cost of $6,000.00. The place was known as the Winstead home and was owned by Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Trogdon and Mrs. Maria A. Winstead. The contract

called for the payment of $30.00 per month to Mrs. Winstead during her lifetime.

The church approved the recommendation of the committee and a building committee of thirteen members was appointed. The old residence on the lot was moved to Sycamore Street. The committee reported back to the church in March, 1906, submitting plans for the new building, drawn by S. W. Folk & Son, architects. The church authorized the committee to proceed with the construction of the building. A contract was let to Winningham and Fries to erect the building at a cost of around $50,000.00. This, together with the lot, called for an outlay of over $55,000.00. The building on West Washington Street was sold to the Methodist Protestant Church for $12,500.00. The congregation agreed to raise $15,000.00 over a period of three years.

Since the Baptist State Convention had been invited to meet with the church in the Fall of 1906, it was necessary to push construction on the new building in order to have it ready for the meeting of the Convention. At that time steel was not used extensively in buildings, so no steel went into the construction of this building, save small pieces above the windows. The massive roof was held up by wooden trusses. When the building was completed, there was a debt of more than thirty thousand dollars on it, which was an enormous debt for that day.

Yet, though it was having problems of its own, the church was not unmindful of the needs of other parts of the city. Growth of population in the western section led to the appointment of a committee to consider the advisability of starting a mission. This committee reported in March, 1904, recommending that a building on West Lee Street be rented and a Sunday School started. This was approved by the church. Under the leadership of Bro. J. C. Olive, and with the help of several members of the church, a Sunday School was organized.

This work grew, and it soon became evident that something should be done toward establishing a permanent work. In

December, 1905, the church authorized the purchase of a lot at a cost of $900.00. A few weeks later, a call was extended to Rev. Chas. E. Maddrey to take charge of the West End work at a salary of $1,000.00, the First Church agreeing to pay $350.00 of the amount. Services were held in an old store building which soon proved to be inadequate. It was evident that a new building would have to be erected to care for the growing work. The lot which had been purchased was sold and a more convenient lot on Forest Avenue was secured. At a meeting of the First Church on Feb. 28, 1906, a group led by Bro. Maddrey appeared requesting that the West End Mission be organized into an independent church. He stated that the new organization could start off with at least forty members, that they had pledged $480.00 the preceding Sunday for the work, and that $2,500.00 could be raised in the community toward a building. Others spoke in favor of an organization, and the following motion was passed:

"That the First Baptist Church of Greensboro give her full consent for the organization of an independent church in the West End, and that we pledge the new church our good will and hearty co-operation."

On the afternoon of March 11th, the group met in the chapel of the State Normal College (now Woman's College of the University of North Carolina), and Forest Avenue Baptist Church was formed, with Dr. Battle in charge. Twenty-one members were dismissed by letter from the First Church to enter into this organization, including some of the most substantial members. Thus, while it was in the midst of its own building campaign, the First Church not only gave of its members and donated a lot, but furnished liberal financial aid in the erection of a building for the new church. That this help was not unappreciated is shown by the following resolution passed by the Forest Avenue Church:

"Whereas our church building is nearing completion, and, as

it has been made possible by the generous aid of the First Baptist Church, Therefore, be it resolved, That we desire to express to our brethren and sisters of the First Church our deep sense of gratitude and loving appreciation for the many tokens of brotherly love manifested toward us as a church and a body of believers in Christ.

"More especially we desire to express to you our heart-felt thanks for the material aid you have given us in the purchase of the lot upon which our building stands, and for the very substantial aid rendered in the erection of our house. We appreciate all this the more when we remember that you are in the midst of building operations which will require a large expenditure of money. We rejoice with you in your splendid outlook for the future and pray God's richest blessings upon all your undertakings."

With the passing of the years, the building then erected proved inadequate and the location undesirable. A lot was purchased on the corner of Walker Avenue and Aycock Street. On this lot a beautiful building has been erected, and the name of the church has been changed from Forest Avenue Baptist Church to College Park Baptist Church. It is now one of the strong churches of the city.

In the Minutes of the First Baptist Church several items of interest appear. On March 30, 1904, the following motion was passed: "Moved that the individual communion cup be adopted." Up to this time a common cup was used, and passed along the pew from one to another. The motion to change this custom was not unanimous.

In July, 1907, upon recommendation from the deacons, two changes were made in the constitution. First, "That the pastor shall be elected to serve for such period of time as he may fruitfully and satisfactorily perform his duties." Up to this time the pastor had been elected for just one year. If he remained more than a year, it was necessary for him to be re-elected. The other

change had to do with the election of deacons. Heretofore deacons had been elected for an indefinite time. This was changed to the rotation system in which a deacon was elected for a term of three years.

In July, 1907, Dr. Battle offered his resignation as pastor of the church to accept a call to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church at Kinston, N. C., the resignation to take effect the following October. For several months the church was without a pastor, but was ably supplied by Dr. R. T. Vann, Dr. Livingston Johnson, Dr. Edmund Harrison, Dr. C. H. Nash, and others.

A committee of twelve, with Lee H. Battle as chairman, was appointed to recommend a successor to Dr. Battle. This committee reported in October, recommending Dr. J. L. White, who was at that time pastor in Beaumont, Texas. This recommendation was approved and a unanimous call was extended to Dr. White at a salary of $3,000.00, which was $1,000.00 more than the church had ever paid. The old parsonage on West Washington Street was sold to Dr. J. T. Brooks for $4,000.00, and the house next door was purchased from J. T. B. Shaw for $6,000.00.

Dr. White came on the field in January, 1908. His pastorate was a fruitful one. He was a strong evangelistic preacher, and large congregations attended the services. There were additions to the church at almost every service. During the year 1909, seventy-nine were baptized into the fellowship of the church, and fifty-nine were received by letter. The membership increased to 538. The Sunday School had an enrollment of 500, with an average attendance of 300.

The church was still hampered by a heavy debt of about $32,000.00. Dr. White proposed a plan for liquidating the debt, which was approved by the church. According to this plan, the members of the church were to raise a certain amount, the Home Mission Board was to be asked for a gift of $5,000.00, and the pastor was to raise a considerable sum from the outside.

The members entered whole-heartedly into the plan. Some of them borrowed money with which to pay their pledges, thinking the whole debt would be cancelled. The Home Mission Board refused to make a gift of $5,000.00, but agreed to pay the interest on $10,000.00, borrowed from the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, for five years, on condition that the church would pay on this debt at least $1,000.00 a year for the next five years. The plan was only partially successful. After these special efforts, in which many sacrificial gifts were made, there remained a debt of around $18,000.00.

On June 23rd, 1909, letters were granted to eleven members of the church "for the purpose of constituting a Baptist church at the Finishing Mills." At that time a finishing mill was operated in the building now occupied by Vick Chemical Company on Wendover Avenue. The mill ceased operations a few years later and the church moved to Magnolia Street and became the Magnolia Street Baptist Church.

The church was still having trouble in meeting current expenses. In July, 1909, the deacons offered the following recommendations, which were approved by the church:

"That the church adopt, for the purpose of raising the amount necessary to meet church expenses, the plan elsewhere in use and commonly known as the 'apportionment plan.'

"That the church choose a standing committee to be known as the 'Apportionment Committee,' which said committee shall consist of five members of the church, whose duty it shall be, within a reasonable time before the beginning of the fiscal year, to determine the amount necessary to be raised during the ensuing year for church expenses, and thereupon determine and prescribe the amount which each individual member of the church ought to pay for such purposes; that said committee, after organizing by the election of a chairman and secretary, shall proceed in the manner above-indicated; that, after determining the amount which each individual member ought to pay, said committee through its secretary or president notify

each individual member of the amount apportioned to him or her in the manner above-indicated, in said notice inviting such individual member to make known to the committee whether or not the apportionment is satisfactory."

In May, 1910, Dr. White offered his resignation to accept the pastorate of the Central Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn. A committee, consisting of the fifteen deacons and eight members from the body of the church, with F. P. Hobgood, Jr., as Chairman, was appointed to recommend a successor.

CHAPTER VII

Progress

1910-1920

The committee appointed to secure a pastor made its report to the church, October 23, 1910, recommending that a call be extended to Rev. J. Clyde Turner, the writer of these lines, who was at that time a patient in a T. B. Sanatorium near Black Mountain. He could give only a conditional acceptance to the call. On the advice of his physician, he offered to come to Greensboro on Saturday, preach on Sunday, and return to the sanatorium on Monday, this arrangement to continue long enough to ascertain whether or not his physical condition would permit his full acceptance of the work. From the first Sunday in December, 1910, until the middle of March of the following year, this schedule was followed. Then his physician agreed that he was able to take up the work. Accordingly, he and his wife moved to Greensboro in March, 1911.

Since the parsonage on West Washington Street had been sold in February and the proceeds applied to the church debt, it became necessary to secure a new home for the pastor. In April, the trustees, J. B. Stroud, J. B. Harrison, and R. L. Patterson, were authorized by the church to purchase the T. D. Sherwood home at 430 West Gaston Street, at a cost of $6,500. The Ladies' Aid Society agreed to assume responsibility for this additional indebtedness. This organization made the annual payments for several years, the church finally assuming responsibility for the remainder of the debt.

The financial condition of the church at this time is indicated by a statement which O. W. Monroe, treasurer, made to the pastor: "If we can raise $100 per week, we will be in good shape." This had reference to the current expenses only, as the

objects of benevolence were cared for by special offerings during the year. The total amount paid in salaries was $213 per month —pastor $150, organist $20, soloist $15, and janitor $28.

A little later the duplex envelope system was adopted by the church, and the percentages for benevolent causes recommended by the Southern Baptist Convention were approved as follows: Foreign Missions 35%, Home Missions 24%, State Missions 24%, Orphanage 10%, Aged Ministers 3%, and Christian Education 3%. In order to keep the different funds entirely separate, the church had four treasurers, one for current expenses, one for benevolences, one for the building fund, and one for the fellowship fund.

The rotation plan for the election of deacons having proved unsatisfactory, the church voted in September, 1911, to return to the old plan of electing deacons for life or good behavior.

From the resignation of Dr. Rowe in 1899, until 1912, Howard Gardner was clerk of the church. The books which contain the minutes of the church from 1912 to 1950 were lost or destroyed, so we have no accurate record of the activities of the church during those years. In trying to record these activities, we are dependent in part on memory. That means that some things of importance may be omitted, and some things only partially recorded.

At the beginning of 1911 there were 581 names on the church roll, but 125 of these were not living in Greensboro. An effort was made to get in touch with these absentee members, advising them to secure letters of dismission and unite with Baptist churches near their places of residence. This resulted in a decrease in membership. However, the church continued to receive members and in 1912 there were 580 on the roll. The total contributions amounted to $6,517.18. The Sunday School, with F. P. Hobgood as superintendent, had an enrollment of 408. There was an active Ladies' Aid Society, Woman's Missionary Society, and young people's missionary organizations.

At that time, the population of Greensboro was around 15,000. There was only one automobile in the congregation, a new one belonging to J. B. Harrison. Most of the people walked to church, some came on street cars, and a few came in buggies. There was a hitching post in front of the church, and another at the side. The morning congregation occupied about two-thirds of the auditorium, with no one in the balcony.

The church was still hampered by a debt of around $18,000 on the building. Various plans for reducing the debt were tried. One of the most successful was the Christmas Club which was promoted by one of the banks of the city. Members of the church were encouraged to join this Club in the name of the church, depositing a certain amount each week. At the end of the year, the total amount, with accrued interest, was turned over to the Building Fund. By 1915, the debt was reduced to $5,500. A successful effort was made the following year to pay off this debt so that the building could be dedicated. But the building was now more than eight years old, and the walls had become dingy. It was decided to have the building repainted before it was dedicated, and it was not until Easter Sunday, 1917, that the dedicatory service was held. The Asheboro Street Church gave up its morning service and the congregation joined with the First Church in this dedicatory service. All notes were publicly burned. Rev. Raleigh White, pastor of the Asheboro Street Church, read the scriptures. Dr. Livingston Johnson, a former pastor, preached the sermon, and the pastor led the dedicatory prayer. At the evening service, Dr. Walt N. Johnson, State Mission Secretary, delivered a message on "Dedication of Self."

It had been a custom of the church to raise money for church purposes by giving suppers, bazaars, etc. It was decided to discontinue this practice, and raise all funds through the practice of Christian stewardship, with special emphasis on tithing.

While the church was endeavoring to free itself from debt, it

was not unmindful of the needs of others at home and abroad. The year 1912 marked the hundredth anniversary of the sailing of Adoniram Judson and his wife as missionaries to Burma. In commemoration of this historic event, the Southern Baptist Convention decided to raise a special fund of $1,000,000 to be used in building hospitals, houses of worship, schools, etc. on the foreign mission fields. This fund was called the Judson Centennial Fund. Dr. R. T. Bryan, veteran missionary to China, came to the Greenboro church and presented the needs. He asked the church to contribute money for the erection of a church building in Chinkiang, China. The church responded by voting to raise several hundred dollars for this purpose.

About this time, the need was seen for starting work in the Glenwood section of the city. The First Church and the Forest Avenue Church co-operated in this effort. A Sunday School was started in an old store building, and worship services were held following the Sunday School. It was not long until the building was sold, and it looked as if the work would have to cease. But Rev. W. H. Eller took the lead in securing a lot at the corner of Freeman Mill Road and Florida Street, and erecting a frame building on it. The First Church contributed several hundred dollars to this work. Soon a church was organized and a full-time pastor was called. The little building soon became inadequate, so it was decided to sell and move to a new location further west on Florida Street. A new building was erected, and the name changed from the Glenwood Baptist Church to the Florida Street Baptist Church.

Mention has been made of the church at the Finishing Mill which later moved to Magnolia Street and became Magnolia Street Baptist Church. At this time the Westminster Presbyterian Church was planning to erect a new building and offered their old frame building for sale. The First Baptist Church gave $250 for the purchase of this building, which was torn down and rebuilt on Magnolia Street for the use of the Magnolia Street Church.

In 1918, the Baptist State Convention decided to raise a fund of $1,000,000 for Christian Education to be used in strengthening and enlarging our Christian schools. The First Church of Greensboro was asked to contribute $16,000 to this fund through pledges to be paid over a period of several years. This effort was started, but before it was completed the Southern Baptist Convention put on a campaign to raise $75,000,000 over a period of five years for the enlargement of our missionary and benevolent program. This was known as the 75 Million Campaign. In North Carolina the educational program was merged into this south-wide effort. H. L. Koontz was made chairman of a committee to have charge of the campaign in this church. Meetings were held and much enthusiasm was kindled. As a result, the church pledged $97,000. Before the five years for the payment of the pledges expired the era of prosperity began to wane, and the churches throughout the South failed to meet their pledges. Only about $60,000,000, of the more than $90,000,000 which had been pledged, was received. But, be it said to the credit of the First Church in Greensboro, every penny it pledged was paid. Though the churches in the state fell short of their goal, there was enlargement of the missionary work and strengthening of the whole program. The Baptist Hospital at Winston-Salem had its birth in this movement.

During this period the country faced two tragic experiences which affected all the churches. In 1917, the United States became involved in World War I. Many of our young men answered the call of their country and went to the battlefront. Some of them gave their lives. During their absence the church endeavored to keep in touch with them through a mimeographed bulletin which was sent to them each month. Those who returned at the close of the war were welcomed with a banquet at the church.

Then, in 1918, an epidemic of influenza swept over the country, proving fatal to many, especially among the strong young men. In an effort to halt the spread of the disease, all public

meetings, including schools and churches, were banned for several weeks. Of course, with the churches closed, the work suffered. The Baptist State Convention, which was to have met in Greensboro in December, had to be postponed until January. However, the experience served to call the people back to God.

At this time there was in the church an increasing interest in missions. This was shown by voting to pay all the expenses of the Sunday School so that all the Sunday School offering, except that of the first Sunday in the month which went to the Orphanage, could go to missions.

In 1918, the rotating plan of electing deacons was adopted for the second time. This plan had a provision which was lacking in the first plan, that no deacon would be eligible for re-election until at least one year after the expiration of his term of office. The number of deacons was set at twenty, five to be elected each year for a term of four years. Dr. W. W. Rowe, who had served as deacon for 27 years, and Bro. John Thomas, who had served 26 years, were elected honorary deacons for life.

Up to 1919, the church had employed no paid help except pastor, organist, soloist, and janitor. That year it was decided to employ someone to assist in the organized work and to have charge of the office. Mrs. S. C. Hilliard (later Mrs. Bain of Dunn, N. C., who passed to her reward in 1957) was employed at a salary of $100 per month. Mrs. Hilliard served very efficiently for two years, resigning to accept a position with the State Sunday School Organization.

Further financial assistance was given to the Magnolia Street church to enable them to secure a strong pastor. In 1920, $40 per month was appropriated for this purpose. The following year, this amount was increased to $66.

At the close of this ten-year period, the membership of the church was 703. The offerings amounted to $18,743.27. The Sunday School reached an enrollment of 503. Following the resignation of F. P. Hobgood as superintendent, Vander Liles

and J. D. Wilkins served in that capacity until the coming of an Educational Director.

During this decade, several fruitful revivals were held, the following men assisting the pastor: Rev. W. L. Walker and E. L. Wolslagel, of the Home Mission Board; Dr. Calvin B. Waller, First Church, Asheville; Dr. Geo. W. McDaniel, First Church, Richmond, Va.; and Dr. Lloyd Wilson, who later became pastor of the First Baptist Church of High Point.

CHAPTER VIII

Development and Retrenchment

1921-1935

Following World War I, there was a period of material prosperity. Contributions to all religious objects advanced. Salaries of church employees were increased. New workers were employed and improvements were planned. One of the most important steps taken was the employment of an Educational Director. Mr. and Mrs. O. E. Lee, who had just been graduated from Southwestern Seminary at Fort Worth, Texas, came to the church in September, 1921. Mr. Lee, with patience and efficiency, began the work of reorganizing the Sunday School and B. Y. P. U. His efforts resulted in a rapid growth in these organizations.

Under the leadership of Mr. Lee, the first Daily Vacation Bible School was held in June, 1922, lasting four weeks. This was not only the first school of its kind in this church, but the first among the Baptist churches of the state. The Sunday School Board did not undertake to promote work of this nature until several years later.

It became evident that, if the work was to continue to grow, more room would have to be provided. An effort was made to secure property adjoining the church. Failing in this, the church decided to put a basement under its building. Up to that time there had been only a small excavation for the furnace. Plans were drawn, and J. C. Morris was given the contract to do the work at a cost of approximately $35,000. This called for a financial campaign which resulted in pledges amounting to $27,750. Bro. Roger Harrison was chairman of the committee which had the work in charge. The work of remodeling was not easy. It

was necessary to dig a basement under the entire building, moving the dirt by wheel barrow. It was also necessary to put a new foundation under the whole structure. Be it said to the credit of the contractor, that this difficult job was done without a crack in the walls of the building.

This additional space provided room for the Beginners, Primary and Junior Departments of the Sunday School, and the Covington Bible Class. But, at best, this proved to be only a temporary relief for the crowded conditions. Soon there was need for more room. In order to meet this need, a room at the Y.M.C.A. was secured at a nominal rent for the use of the Covington Bible Class. As early as 1926, the deacons were asked to consider the future growth of the church and make plans for it.

By 1925 the membership of the church had increased to 1,109, and the Sunday School enrolment to 1,209. The contributions to all causes amounted to $62,295.99. However, there was a rather heavy debt resting on the church. In addition to remodeling the building, a new organ was purchased. A little later, Eugene Street was widened and paved. The church was assessed, not only for its part of the pavement, but for benefits, amounting to $3,300. This made the entire cost of all improvements something over $45,000. With the amount pledged, this left a debt of about $25,000.

Other calls for assistance came to the church. In 1923 two new churches were organized, the Bessemer Church and the Stevens Memorial Church. The First Church assisted in the organization of the Bessemer Church, and contributed $100 to the Stevens Memorial Church. In 1925 the Southern Baptist Convention sent out a call to the churches for an offering to promote relief work in the Orient. The First Church responded with an offering of $700.

In 1926 the church published the *History of the Baptists of Greensboro,* by Dr. W. W. Rowe. This little book furnished information concerning the Baptist work in Greensboro from

its beginning until 1926. This writer is indebted to Dr. Rowe for many of the facts appearing in this volume.

About this time additions were made to the working force of the church. Miss Lillie Matthews, who had been employed for half time as Financial Secretary, was employed for full time. For many years she served most acceptably in this position. In addition to her duties as Financial Secretary, she served as assistant Church Clerk. In 1926, Miss Inabelle Coleman, who had been a teacher in the Greensboro High School for several years, was employed as Young People's Worker. Bro. J. B. Harrison paid the greater part of her salary. She was a young woman of unusual ability, and a tireless worker. She has been supported by the church as a missionary to China for many years. Frank Casper, who had done an outstanding work as leader of Scout Troop No. 5, was employed for work among the boys of the church. In 1927, Mrs. Nettie Hoge was employed as Church Hostess, a position which she held until 1942. During the first years of her service, half of her salary was paid by the Woman's Missionary Society and half by her son, James Hoge of New York. Later, the church assumed full responsibility for the salary. Mrs. Hoge superintended the meals which were served at the church, looked after the relief work, taught a large class of young women in the Sunday School, and did much church visiting. She was a woman of deep conviction and consecration.

But, as the church was moving on to larger things, financial conditions began to deteriorate. Contributions fell off. Then, in 1929, the crash came. Business institutions began to fail and banks to close. Many people were thrown out of employment. Retrenchment became necessary. The pastor suggested to the deacons that the budget for Current Expenses be reduced by $5,000. A committee was appointed to consider this suggestion and make a report to the church. The report was made, recommending that the Young People's Worker and the Boys' Worker be discontinued, that the church bulletin be eliminated, and other expenses reduced. This report was adopted, but it did not

fully solve the problem. Expenses were still above income. The employees of the church volunteered a cut in their salaries. One half of the regular offerings of the Sunday School, all of which had been going to benevolences, was transferred to Current Expenses. Thus was the budget balanced.

There was still a rather heavy debt which had been incurred in remodeling and improving the building. Bro. J. B. Harrison died in 1928, leaving a bequest of $25,000 to the church to be used in enlarging the old building, or toward the construction of a new building. This bequest was to be paid within three years. In 1933, the two banks in which the church had funds deposited closed, entailing a loss to the church of more than two thousand dollars. A check for $16,000 had been drawn on one of these banks and forwarded to the Virginia Life Insurance Company in payment of borrowed money. Though the bank closed before it was cashed, the check had gone far enough to be considered as a preferred item and was paid in full. At last the church was free from a debt which had been something of a burden for ten years.

Once again the church refused to let home obligations keep it from meeting its obligations to others. The custom of having a Christmas entertainment and giving presents to the children was abandoned, and the White Christmas plan was adopted. According to this plan, the members of the Sunday School were asked to bring gifts for some worthy cause. A special service was arranged, and the gifts were presented by classes and departments.

In 1926, when the Baptist State Convention met in Wilmington, the Foreign Mission Board had announced that, on account of financial conditions, it would not be able to return the missionaries who were at home on furlough to their fields. Among these were Dr. and Mrs. W. C. Newton. Dr. Newton was a former pastor of the Greensboro Church and still retained his membership in it. In a speech before the Convention, he made a plea for help to enable him and his family to return to China,

stating that the Greensboro Church had taken the lead in providing funds to send him to China the first time. When he had finished, the pastor of the Greensboro Church arose and said the church in Greensboro would provide the funds for his return to China. The pastor returned home and told some of the brethren about his rash promise and suggested that a love offering for the Newtons be substituted for the white gifts at Christmas. The matter was presented to the church and unanimously and enthusiastically adopted. The Woman's Missionary Society agreed to merge their Lottie Moon Offering with the offering of the Sunday School. When the gifts were all reported, there was more than enough to pay the salaries of Dr. and Mrs. Newton. This was the beginning of the Christmas Love Offering which has grown through the years until the amount was more than $16,000 in 1958. Following the retirement of Dr. and Mrs. Newton, the family of Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Gillespie, who were also missionaries in China, was assigned to the church. Their salaries were paid out of the Christmas offering until their retirement. When Miss Inabelle Coleman went as a missionary to China, her expenses were paid out of this fund, and she is still supported by the church.

At this time all of our denominational agencies, both state and southwide, were heavily in debt. In 1927, the State Mission Board put on a Centennial Campaign in an effort to raise over a million dollars to relieve pressing debts. The Greensboro Church pledged $16,682 to this fund. However, the campaign was not a success, and the Convention was left with a burdensome debt. In an effort to meet pressing obligations, a plea for a special offering was sent out to the churches. The Greensboro Church responded with an offering of $1,000. An appeal was also made by the South-wide Agencies, which were facing a critical financial situation. The Greensboro Church contributed $2,000 to help in this emergency. In 1933, a south-wide effort was made to relieve the burden of debt by the donation of old gold, which was to be collected by the churches and sent into

headquarters to be sold. The Greensboro Church declined to enter into this method of raising money, but contributed $1,000 in cash instead. The regular gifts to the Denominational Program were not diminished because of these special offerings. The church took the lead among the churches of the state in its gifts to benevolences.

In 1933, Bro. Roger Harrison, who had served as Chairman of the Finance Committee for several years and guided its financial program through a critical period, resigned. Bro. W. M. York was elected to succeed him and has served most efficiently in this position for more than twenty years.

During these stressful years there was wide-spread destitution. Many people were out of work, and those who were working received small pay. Many calls for relief came to the church. Donations of clothes, provisions and coal, as well as money, from many sources made it possible for the church to provide for the needs of many.

The need for more room in which to expand the work of the church became pressing. Arrangements were made to rent a portion of the Masonic Temple. An Adult Department and the Young People's Department of the Sunday School were transferred to this building. Later the chapel of the Hanes Funeral Home was rented for the Fellowship Class.

In the fall of 1935, a "Tithe Testing Campaign" was put on throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. The plan was to get as many people as possible to tithe for three months on a trial basis. As a result, 268 tithers were enlisted in the Greensboro Church.

At this time a call for help came from another source. A new church, the Bailey Memorial Baptist Church, was organized on the High Point Road. This church appealed to the other Baptist churches of the city for help in securing a building in which to worship. The First Church responded with an offering of $215.

In spite of pressing financial problems, the spiritual develop-

ment of the church was not forgotten. In addition to the regular services, special evangelistic meetings were held almost every year. Dr. J. H. Dew, Rev. J. T. Riddick, Rev. J. A. McMillan, Dr. Charles E. Maddrey, and Dr. Kyle Yates were among those who assisted in these services. There were three city-wide evangelistic meetings during this period, the George Stevens meeting in 1923, the McLendon meeting in 1926, and the Ham meeting in 1932.

The need for more room was an increasing problem. Something would have to be done to provide for the future growth of the church. In the Fall of 1935, a committee, composed of W. M. York, Johnson J. Hayes, and J. D. Wilkins, was appointed "to consider plans for the future growth of the church."

On the first Sunday in December, 1935, a special service was held in commemoration of the writer's twenty-fifth anniversary as pastor of the church. W. M. York presided, and short talks were made by F. P. Hobgood, A. W. Cooke, and Dr. Chas. W. Moseley, with a brief response by the pastor. The pastor's wife, who had shared the work of twenty-five years, also shared in the honors of this occasion.

At the close of this period, the church membership was 2,007; the Sunday School had an enrollment of 2,170, the Training Union 132, and the women's missionary organizations 486. Advances had been made in spite of the many difficulties.

CHAPTER IX

Dreams and Difficulties

1936-1948

As financial conditions improved, plans were formulated for reducing the heavy debts which rested on our denominational agencies. At the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1935, a plan known as The Hundred Thousand Club was inaugurated. An effort was made to enlist one hundred thousand men and women who would agree to contribute one dollar per week above their regular offerings, all of which was to be used in reducing state and south-wide debts. Forty members of the Greensboro Church joined the Club, contributing $1,400 the first year, $1,200 of which came from the women. This Club was continued for several years with satisfactory results.

For a number of years J. B. Stroud served as chairman of the Music Committee of the church, and Benjamin J. Bates as Choir Director. George Thompson, organist for several years, was succeeded by Mrs. Charles Banks. In 1936, Genter Stephens was employed as Music Director and Young People's Worker. After two years of faithful service, he resigned to enter Southwestern Seminary for further training. Mrs. Banks was elected as Choir Director, in addition to her duties as organist. For fifteen years she served in this position to the satisfaction of all. When she severed her connection with the church, she left with the love and esteem of the entire congregation.

The committee appointed to make plans for the future growth of the church made little progress. The program was so large, and finances were so scarce, they scarcely knew how to proceed. In February, 1937, the committee made the following recommendation, "That we prepare to meet our future needs

by creating and promoting a Church Improvement Fund." This recommendation was approved and the Finance Committee was authorized to promote the Fund, and the special committee was continued to work out a definite program.

The urgent need was set forth in a report of the Finance Committee: "In order for us to appreciate the need for larger Sunday School quarters and church auditorium, it is only necessary for us to consider the fact that 500 of our 2,000 Sunday School members are at the present meeting in rented quarters. Two or three of our other Sunday School classes have grown to such size that their class meetings are more in the nature of small church services than of the customary Sunday School classes. In fair weather our Church auditorium and Sunday School building are freqeuntly filled to overflowing, and some few people go away. In order to better accommodate those who are crowded into the Sunday School rooms an amplifying system has been recently installed."

But there were other needs that called for attention. The Finance Committee included the following statement in its report: "Our heating plant is being patched from time to time, and in order to put it in first-class condition approximately $1,500 will be required. The carpet in our church is becoming badly worn in places. Additional chairs are needed. Paint would make a great improvement in the interior of our church. All of these are necessary in our present quarters without any regard to our other needs." This work was done at a cost of about $3,000.

While all recognized the need, little was done toward future needs until one of the members of the church presented to the special committee a check for $2,500 on condition that the church raise $7,500 within the next twelve months. The committee recommended to the church that the challenge be accepted and plans made for raising the money. It was decided to put on a campaign in May for pledges to be paid within a

year. The result of the campaign was 338 pledges for $8,579.50. It was also voted to have a Building Fund campaign in May of each year. The date was set at this time of year so that the Building Fund would not interfere with the regular contributions of the church. Gifts to this Fund were to be "over and above" regular gifts.

The successful completion of the first year's campaign gave renewed impetus to the whole program. An option was secured on the Balsley property on the corner of Madison Avenue and N. Mendenhall Street, consisting of about 6½ acres, on which stood a frame dwelling. The church unanimously voted to purchase this property at a cost of $27,500, plus certain fees, bringing the total cost to nearly $30,000. It was generally felt that the church had been divinely guided in acquiring this splendid site for a new building. Two verses of Scripture were adopted as mottoes for the task ahead: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that built it," (Psa. 127:1), and "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory" (Psa. 115:1).

The goal for the following year was set at $20,000, which, together with the amount already used, would pay for the property. At the end of the year, all obligations had been met and $2,827.41 was left in the Building Fund. This included $350 received for the sale of the residence on the lot. On a bright Sunday afternoon in June, the congregation met under the shade of the great elm trees for the dedication of the lot. Notes of indebtedness were burned, and the lot was set apart for the service of God.

In 1940, Dr. H. E. Tralle of Washington, D. C., an expert in church planning, was engaged to come to Greensboro for one week to give advice concerning the contemplated building. It was thought at that time that an adequate building could be erected for $250,000. The plan was to start the building when $100,000 had been paid into the Fund. This, together with the

amount which would be received from the sale of the old church building, would enable the church to proceed without incurring a heavy debt. Dr. Tralle's visit stirred up some enthusiasm, and the goal for the next year was fixed at $30,000. The amount pledged was $31,113.95. But the outbreak of World War II, with its accompanying difficulties, put an end to all dreams of a new building within the near future. However, the annual campaign for funds was continued.

With the end of the War in 1945, there was renewed interest in the building program. A Building Committee, consisting of the following members, J. D. Wilkins, Chairman, W. L. Carter, Stafford Webb, W. M. York, Miss Bessie Matthews, and Mrs. Moody Stroud, had been appointed in 1942, with a larger advisory committee representing the various departments of the Sunday School, Training Union, and Woman's Missionary Society. This committee was instructed to proceed with plans for the new building. Mr. W. A. Harrell, of the Department of Architecture of the Sunday School Board, was called on for advice and suggestions. Mr. A. C. Woodroof was chosen as architect, with Eggers & Higgins, of New York, as consultants. A general plan for the building was presented to the church in 1948, and approved. It was now evident that, with the increased costs of building, the new structure would cost more than a million dollars. The total offerings to the Building Fund up to that time were around $300,000. The parsonage on West Gaston Street had been sold for $8,500, and that amount was added to the Building Fund.

The church was confronted with an additional problem in 1946. The City Building Inspector made an examination of the building on West Market Street and pronounced it "unsafe and dangerous," on account of deformed and inadequate roof trusses, etc. This called for an additional financial outlay.

Several items of interest are to be noted in passing. One of the faithful members of the church in its early struggles was

R. L. Vernon, who later moved to Charlotte. The family never lost its interest in the Greensboro Church. One of his sons, who resided in Charlotte up to the time of his death, left a will which contained a provision leaving one-third interest in the building at 236-238 South Elm Street to six cousins, and at their death, to the First Baptist Church of Greensboro.

Through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Tuttle, an educational fund, to be known as The Melissa Wilkerson Educational Fund, was set up in memory of Mrs. Tuttle's mother, Mrs. Melissa Wilkerson. This fund is being used in making loans to worthy students seeking to get an education.

The Church took an interest in the work of the Baptist Student Union at Woman's College from its beginning. Cars were furnished to bring the young ladies to Sunday School. Financial support was given to the work.

Bailey Memorial Church was experiencing some difficulties, and appealed to the First Church for advice and assistance. The suggestion was made to them that they call Dr. Forest Fraser at a salary of $40 per week, the First Church agreeing to contribute $15 per week until the church could get established on a firm foundation. The plan worked well. Under the leadership of Dr. Fraser, the church soon became self-supporting. A new building was erected at a new location, and the name changed to the Immanuel Baptist Church.

During this period, several changes were made among the church employees. A Personnel Committee of seven members, with J. D. Wilkins as chairman, was appointed. In 1941, Miss Lillie Matthews, who had served long and well, was permitted to retire, and Miss Cosette Lawrence, of Texas, was employed. Harold McManus, a senior at Wake Forest College, was employed during the summer months to assist in the work among the young people. For several months the health of Mr. Lee had been declining. The whole church and community were grieved at his death on December 31, 1941. For twenty years he had

served as Educational Director, and had won the respect and love of all. Under his leadership, the Sunday School, the Training Union, the Daily Vacation Bible School, and other phases of the work, had shown steady growth.

In March, 1942, Mr. C. S. Hodge was employed as Educational Director, coming from a similar position in the First Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Va. Mr. Hodge was a young man, full of energy and enthusiasm. For more than four years he and his accomplished wife served the church acceptably. Mr. Hodge organized and directed a Fellowship Hour, following the Sunday evening services, for the benefit of the young men who were in camp. When the Ridgecrest Assembly was cancelled in the summer of 1945, on account of war conditions, Mr. Hodge led in holding what was called "Little Ridgecrest." The meetings were held at the First Baptist Church, all the Baptist churches of the city co-operating. A splendid program of study and inspiration was conducted with satisfactory results.

Upon the retirement of Mrs. Hoge as Church Hostess in 1942, Mrs. O. E. Lee was chosen to succeed her. She still serves efficiently in that position. In April, 1943, Miss Lawrence resigned as Financial Secretary, and Mrs. R. W. Morton was elected to fill that post. She, too, has continued to render excellent service until the present time. Mr. Hodge resigned in 1946, and Mr. Frank Stubbs, of Jacksonville, Fla., was chosen as Educational Director.

Several fruitful revivals were held during this period. In the spring of 1939, the Baptist churches of the city co-operated in simultaneous revival services under the auspices of the Evangelistic Department of the Home Mission Board. Dr. Roland Leavell, who was at the head of that Department, and Mr. Inman Johnson, of Louisville Seminary, conducted the services in the First Baptist Church. It was a gracious meeting, resulting in 120 additions to the church. Eighty of these were received on profession of faith.

In 1943, Mr. Chester Swor assisted in a revival, with special

emphasis on work among the young people. Mr. Swor was a dynamic speaker, and the services were largely attended, with fine results.

In the spring of 1944, Dr. Ellis A. Fuller, President of the Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., was invited for a meeting. At that time efforts were under way to raise funds to build a chapel at the Seminary. Dr. Fuller came with the understanding that his services would be free, and that all offerings for the meeting would go to the Chapel Fund. The response was gratifying, nearly $3,000 being contributed. Many were received into the church on profession of faith.

In 1947, Dr. Roland Leavell, who had become President of the New Orleans Seminary, came to the church for another meeting, which resulted in many additions. On the closing night, all the new members were asked to stand in a line around the walls of the building. The line extended around the main auditorium, and into the Sunday School building.

On the first Sunday in December, 1947, the pastor, having reached the age of seventy years, and having completed thirty-seven years in the pastorate of the church, offered his resignation to take effect the following April. The membership of the church at that time was 2,680. The Sunday School had an enrollment of 2,288, the Training Union 233, Missionary Organizations over 600. Total contributions amounted to $166,-066.91. At the request of the church, he continued his pastorate until August.

A large committee, with Stafford Webb as chairman, was appointed to secure a new pastor. Thus, tender ties that had been knit through the years, were severed.

CHAPTER X

A Period of Prosperity

1948-1955

The committee appointed to secure a pastor for the church recommended Dr. Claud Bowen, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss. He was unanimously called, and entered upon his duties the first of September, 1948. An installation service was held Sunday morning, September 6th. Stafford Webb, chairman of the board of deacons, presided and welcomed the pastor on behalf of the congregation. Dr. Joseph M. Garrison, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, and president of the Greensboro Ministerial Association, welcomed Dr. Bowen on behalf of the ministers of the city. Dr. M. A. Huggins, General Secretary of the Baptist State Convention, spoke in behalf of the Baptists of the state. Dr. Bowen made a short talk in response. On the evening of September 10th a reception for the new pastor and his family was given at the church. A home for the new pastor had been purchased at 2504 Camden Road. A few years later this home was sold and a larger one purchased at 203 West Greenway North.

Dr. Bowen was in his early prime and, under his consecrated leadership, the church entered upon its era of greatest prosperity, both material and spiritual. More money has been contributed, and more people have been won to Christ in the ten years of his pastorate than in any similar period in the history of the church.

In June, 1950, the number of deacons was increased from twenty-eight to thirty-six. In July, 1952, an organization to be known as Junior Service Men was formed. The name was later changed to Junior Deacons.

Mr. Frank Stubbs, after two years of efficient service as Educational Director, resigned to accept a position with the First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Ga. The church was fortunate in securing Mr. S. C. Ray, of Hattiesburg, Miss., as his successor. Under his capable leadership the Sunday School, the Training Union, and the Daily Vacation Bible School have experienced rapid growth.

The challenging task before the church was the new building. This called for the raising of several thousand dollars. On recommendation of the Finance Committee and the Deacons, the following resolution was passed by the church: "Be it resolved by the members of the First Baptist Church, in meeting called and assembled on this the 4th day of May, 1949, that we immediately launch a campaign to secure pledges totaling $295,000.00 payable over a period of two years, beginning June 1, 1949, ending May 31, 1951." As a result of this campaign, 1,379 members pledged $299,387.78.

In August, 1950, with cash on hand amounting to $506,373.51, the church authorized the Trustees, on recommendation of the Building Committee and Finance Committee, to let the contract to Geo. W. Kane for the erection of the building which, with its furnishings, would cost something over a million dollars. The Trustees were further authorized to borrow $150,000 from the Guilford National Bank, and $300,000 from the Jefferson Life Insurance Company. This would make it possible to complete the building with a debt of not more than $450,000. In June, 1951, the church voted to sell the building on West Market Street to the First Evangelical Lutheran Church for the sum of $105,000.

Certain changes had been made in the plans in order to lower the cost. But, in April, 1952, the following resolution was passed: "Be it resolved by the First Baptist Church of the City of Greensboro, N. C., in meeting duly called and assembled on this the 9th day of April, 1952, that the Building Committee be and is hereby authorized to proceed with its plans to complete

our new Church and Religious educational building and furnish the same, install air-conditioning equipment to air condition the Church auditorium, Chapel and Church offices, and to surface an off-street parking area to the west and north of the Church building, with the understanding that the total cost shall not exceed $1,244,870.76."

There were four significant events in connection with the new building: First, the ground-breaking. This ceremony took place on the church lot on Sunday afternoon, August 6th, 1950. The First Baptist News carried the following account of this event: "Ground-breaking ceremonies for our new church were held last Sunday afternoon on the church building site. A large crowd of church members and friends gathered for the occasion. Dr. Bowen presided and recognized committees and special guests. Dr. Turner reviewed the building efforts from 1937 until the present. He challenged the members of the First Baptist Church to join hearts and minds in the great task ahead. Dirt was turned by Dr. Turner, Dr. Bowen, Mr. Wilkins, and Judge York. A prayer of dedication and the singing of the Doxology closed the service."

Second, Cornerstone Laying. This took place on Wednesday afternoon, October 10th, 1951, at 5:30. In spite of a cold rain, a representative crowd gathered in the front portion of the partly-completed building for the service. Dr. Bowen presided and read an appropriate selection from the Scriptures (Ephesians 2:13-22). A quartet composed of Carl Webb, James Henderson, Paul Frank, and William Baucom, sang several appropriate hymns. A short address was delivered by the writer. Then the crowd went on the outside for the laying of the cornerstone. The following articles were placed in the stone: a Bible, presented by Mrs. Nettie Hoge; the church roll, by Vander Liles; the church history, by Dr. W. C. Jackson; documents pertaining to the building program, by J. D. Wilkins; a copy of the Minutes of the Piedmont Baptist Association, by W. M. York; a list of the church officers, by Gay Hensley; copies of sermons by Dr.

Bowen and the writer, by A. A. Chandler and Carol Bowen; copy of the original church covenant, by S. C. Ray; copy of Biblical Recorder, by Mrs. C. G. Freeman; copy of Charity and Children, by W. L. Carter; copies of the Greensboro newspapers, by James Troxler. These articles were received and placed in the cornerstone by Miss Mabel Straughn and Mrs. B. Latcher Webster.

Third, The First Service. The building was ready for occupancy in the Fall of 1952. A week of special services was observed, November 30-December 5, with the following speakers: Dr. Bowen; Dr. Oscar Johnson, Pastor of Third Baptist Church, St. Louis; Dr. Duke McCall, President of the Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; Miss Alma Hunt, Executive Secretary of the Women's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention; Dr. Baker James Cauthen, Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board; and the writer. The closing event on Friday evening was a banquet for young people and intermediates, with Mr. James Langley, student of Princeton Theological Seminary, as speaker. Dr. W. C. Newton, a former pastor, and Mrs. Newton were honored guests.

Four, The Dedication. The building was completed in 1952, with a debt of over $300,000. The church set as its goal, "Debt Free by 1956." When Moses called on the Children of Israel for an offering with which to build the Tabernacle, the result is recorded in Exodus 36:5: "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make." The members of the First Baptist Church brought more than enough. At the close of 1955 all debts were paid and $8,164.50 was left in the treasury, an achievement that attracted wide attention.

On Sunday morning, January 1, 1956, the dedicatory service was held. It was a beautiful day, and the congregation filled both Sanctuary and Chapel. The two living ex-pastors and their wives were present, Dr. and Mrs. W. C. Newton, and Dr. and Mrs. J. Clyde Turner.

SERVICE OF DEDICATION
January 1, 1956

"All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name"—
To be sung by the congregation

Prayer.....Dr. William C. Newton, Pastor 1901-1902

Congratulations from Greensboro Ministerial Fellowship—
Dr. Eugene Few, President

Scripture, Responsive Reading, Psalm 84—
S. C. Ray, Educational Director

"Faith of our Fathers".....To be sung by congregation

Call To Prayer, Pastoral Prayer, Choral Response

Offertory—"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"—To be sung by the Sanctuary Choir under the direction of E. L. Williams, Minister of Music; Mrs. Kathryn Hodgkin, Organist

Significance of the Day.....Dr. Claud Bowen, Pastor
Reading of congratulations from presidents of Baptist World Alliance, Southern Baptist Convention, and North Carolina Convention

Presentation of the Cancelled Mortgage..Judge William York, Chairman of Building Fund

Doxology.....To be sung by the congregation

Dedicatory Sermon.....Dr. J. Clyde Turner, Pastor 1910-1948

Invitation Hymn—"Take My Life and Let It Be"

Reception of New Members

Benediction

A beautiful brochure was prepared for the occasion under the supervision of Mr. S. C. Ray, Educational Director. At the evening service, recognition was given to J. D. Wilkins and the Building Committee, and to W. M. York and the Finance Committee. The Church was fortunate in having these two men to lead in this building program: J. D. Wilkins, Chairman of the

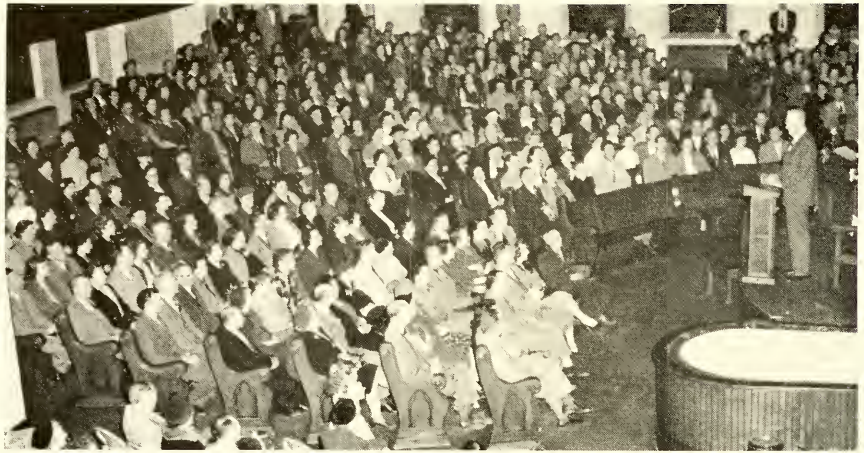
First Baptist Church, Greensboro, North Carolina
Construction was begun on this building in August 1950 and was completed in November 1952.

Washington Street Building
Built in 1887

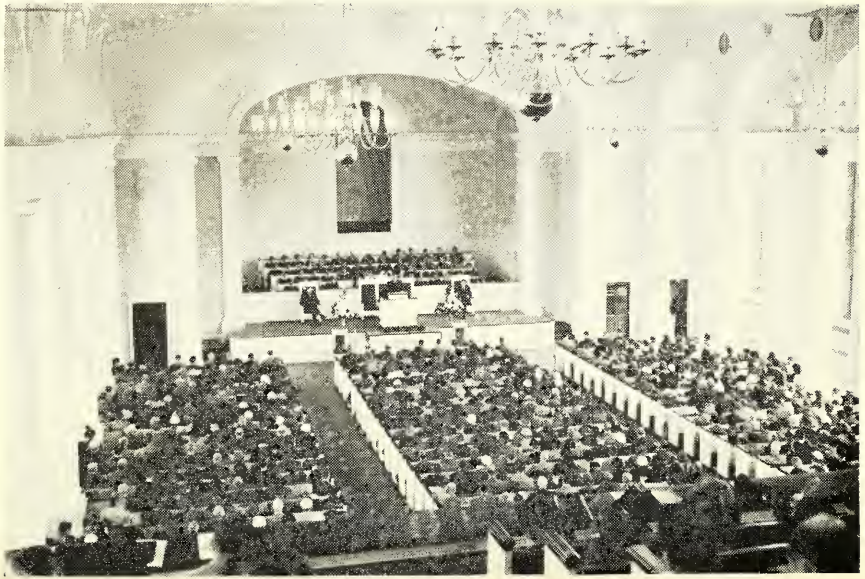
Dr. W. C. Newton
Pastor 1901-1902 (one of the three living pastors in 1959)

West Market Street Building
Built in 1906

One of the first Vacation Bible Schools to be held in the South was held in the First Baptist Church of Greensboro in the early 1920's. This picture was probably made in 1922. Mr. O. E. Lee is at left in dark suit. Dr. Turner is at right in dark suit.



Picture taken in the West Market Street building in January of 1952. Dr. Turner was teaching his book, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Church.*

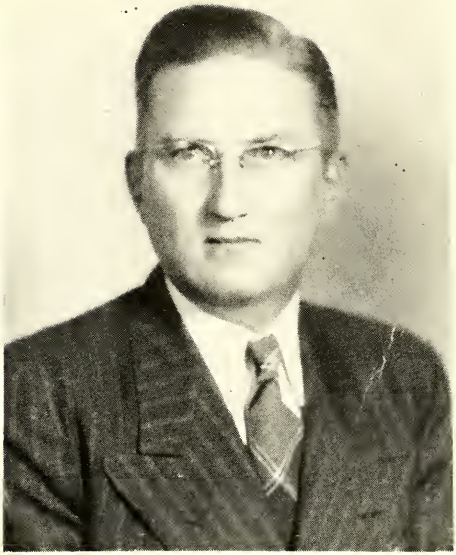


Picture taken during the first service in the present building on November 30, 1952.

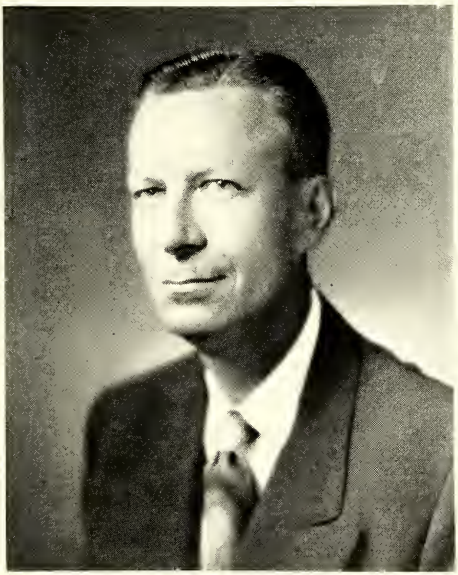
Dr. J. Clyde Turner
Pastor 1910-1948

Dr. Claud B. Bowen
Pastor 1948–

O. E. Lee
Educational Director 1921-1941



C. S. Hodge
Educational Director 1942-1946



Frank Stubbs
Educational Director 1946-1949

S. C. Ray
Minister of Education 1949–

CHURCH STAFF, 1959

Seated: Kathryn Hodgkin, organist; Mrs. O. E. Lee, hostess; Claud B. Bowen, pastor; Mrs. R. W. Morton, financial secretary; Ann Poole, pastor's secretary. *Standing:* Dorothy Cox, director of children's work; Mrs. R. S. Maitland, educational secretary; Mrs. Julian Lanier, secretary; Randall Lolley, assistant pastor; E. L. Williams, minister of music; John Hancock, building superintendent; S. C. Ray, minister of education; Mrs. W. L. Wharton, visitor; Nancy Kistler, youth director.

Building Committee, who gave much time and effort in looking after the details of the building and its furnishings; and W. M. York, Chairman of the Finance Committee, who guided the financial program with splendid ability. Short talks were made by Dr. Newton, the writer, and Dr. Bowen.

Thus was brought to realization a dream that seemed impossible fifteen years before. It was made possible by the united efforts of the whole church. Some facts concerning the building are worthy of notice.

"The Main Sanctuary, including choir, seats 1,800. The Chapel, including ante-rooms, seats approximately 275. The first floor auditorium seats 750, or 500 at dining tables. The educational building was built to accommodate between 2,000 and 2,200 persons, if attendance of various age groups is in accord with calculated percentages.

"The library has shelving to accommodate 6,000 volumes. A kitchen with adequate equipment was installed to provide dinners and banquets for organizations of the church. The beautifully appointed parlor was furnished in honor of Mrs. J. Clyde Turner, former pastor's wife.

"The organ in the sanctuary is an Austin three-manual pipe organ, with chimes for the sanctuary, and Schulmerich electronic bells for tower. The chapel is equipped with a Baldwin electronic organ and a Steinway grand piano.

"The size of the original purchase of land upon which the church was built was 6 1/6 acres. Additional land to the west was purchased and given to the church, making our present area approximately nine acres in size. The paved parking area will accommodate over 200 cars.

"Architect for the building was A. C. Woodroof, consulting architects were Eggers and Higgins, New York, N. Y., and the Architectural Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn. In the early days of planning, much valuable assistance was rendered by two former educational directors, Charles Hodge and Frank Stubbs.

"The general contract for construction was awarded to Geo. W. Kane, Greensboro. The plumbing and heating contractor was Dick and Kirkman, Inc., of Greensboro. The electrical contractor was Gate City Electric Company, also of Greensboro."

On February 12, 1953, the Church Architectural Guild of America presented to the church the following award: "Second Award for Religious Educational Building."

Since the completion of the building the church has entertained several denominational gatherings. In November, 1953, the Baptist State Convention met here. In March, 1954, the Annual Meeting of the Woman's Missionary Union was held in the new building. The Evangelistic Conference and the Baptist Student Union Convention have been entertained here.

During the stress and strain of finishing the building program, the church did not neglect its missionary obligations. Its contributions to the Denominational Program increased each year, leading all the churches of the state. In 1955, the amount given to outside objects was $118,102.

What about the spiritual side of the church life during these years? The membership grew from 2,743 in 1949 to 3,596 in 1955, many of these being received on profession of faith. Several fruitful revivals were held. Among those who assisted in these meetings were Dr. Leo Green, of the Southeastern Seminary; Dr. Duke McCall, of the Southern Seminary; Mr. Howard Butt, of Texas; and Dr. Roy Angell, of Miami, Florida.

Perhaps the most fruitful season was in the Fall of 1951 when the Billy Graham Evangelistic Party conducted a city-wide revival, continuing for several weeks. The meetings were held at the Fair Grounds, and multitudes attended. Hundreds rededicated their lives, and many souls were saved. There were 428 additions to the First Baptist Church during that associational year, the largest number received in any one year in the history of the church. Of these, 146 were received on profession of faith.

But the church has not depended on revival meetings to reach the people. The spirit of evangelism continues through

the year. New members are received practically every Sunday.

With the growth of the church, increased responsibilities rested on the pastor. In May, 1956, help was provided in the election of Mr. William G. Wilson as assistant pastor, and he entered upon his duties July 15, of that year.

CHAPTER XI

Expansion

1956-1959

With the completion of the building program, the church might have decided to take a "breathing spell." But not so. It immediately launched a program for the purpose of improving its own property and reaching out a helping hand to needy places. On October 19, 1955, the following recommendation by a special committee and the deacons of the church was unanimously adopted:

1. That another fund, to be known as the "Advancement Fund," be established by the church to take the place of the Building Fund; and that the members be asked to make pledges to the Advancement Fund on an annual basis; that pledges for the Advancement Fund be received at the same time pledges are received each year for the Current Expense and Benevolence Fund; that separate envelopes for the Advancement Fund be used, just as we are now using separate envelopes for the Building Fund; and that we continue to use the same duplex envelope that we have been using for the Current Expense and Benevolence Funds.

2. That the Advancement Fund be used for an Advancement Program consisting of both Local Mission Work and Local Improvements in Our Church; and that 60% of the Advancement Fund be used for Local Mission Work, and 40% for Local Improvements in Our Church.

3. That the Local Mission Program include such of the following projects as shall be determined, approved, and passed upon from time to time by the Board of Deacons and the Church Membership:

(a) Assisting established small local churches which need financial help to secure adequate facilities or a properly trained minister.

(b) Purchasing lots and establishing missions in growing sections of our County, and assisting these missions until they develop into self-supporting churches.

(c) Establishing and financing missions in rented quarters in needy, congested sections of our city for the purpose of trying to reach people who are not being reached by established churches.

(d) Giving financial assistance to needy local people who are studying to prepare themselves for the ministry or for religious service, and to ministers of small local churches who are in need of further education.

4. That the Local Improvements in our church for which 40% of the Advancement Fund will be used be determined, approved, and passed upon from time to time by the Board of Deacons and the Church Membership. An Advancement Committee, with W. M. York as Chairman, was appointed to direct this Advancement Program.

Since the two aspects of this work advanced separately, it would seem wise to discuss them that way. Let us first look at the story of Local Mission Work.

Local Mission Work

LAWNDALE—In July, 1956, the church voted to purchase a lot, consisting of 3.6 acres, on Lawndale Drive at a cost of $25,000, for the purpose of establishing a new church in that fast-growing section of the city. On September 9th, 189 people met in the Joyner School building, organized a Sunday School, and formed an organization which was to be an arm of the First Church. Ten people responded to an invitation to become members of the new church. Mr. W. G. Wilson, assistant pastor

of the First Church, was called as pastor of this little flock. At the end of the fourth Sunday the Sunday School enrollment reached 201. The new church organization experienced a rapid growth, new members being added almost every Sunday. Since this group was an arm of the First Church, the members were recognized as members of the mother church.

Plans were drawn for a new building to be erected on the Lawndale lot at a cost of $125,000. The first service in this new building was held July 7, 1957. By this time the membership of the church had increased to 190. On October 20, 1957, the members of the Lawndale Church voted unanimously to ask that they be constituted as an autonomous, independent Baptist church, agreeing to assume responsibility for a debt of $15,000 still resting on the building. The request was granted and, on the last Sunday of 1957, the new church was duly organized. Rev. W. G. Wilson was called as permanent pastor. The Trustees of the First Church were authorized to deed the property to the Trustees of the new church, with the following provision: "That the property shall revert to the Trustees of the First Baptist Church of Greensboro if Lawndale Baptist Church ever ceases to be a Missionary Baptist Church cooperating with Baptist Churches in the local Association, Baptist State Convention, and Southern Baptist Convention.

The Lawndale Church is growing rapidly, and gives promise of becoming one of the strong churches of the city.

HUNTER HILLS—On October 10, 1956, Mr. York, Chairman of the Advancement Committee, presented plans for sponsoring a new church in the Hunter Hills section. It was estimated that this new work could be started and operated in the Hunter Hills schoolhouse at a cost of $5,000 a year. One of the families in the First Church agreed to underwrite the operating expenses of this new work for one year at a maximum cost of $5,000, provided the Piedmont Association make a down payment on a lot as a site for the new church and the First Baptist

Church assume responsibility for $8,400 to finish paying for the lot, the total cost of which was $11,400.

The first meeting for the new organization was held in the Hunter School building on November 4th, 1956. There were 150 people present for this first meeting. Twenty-five people responded to the invitation to become members of the new church which, like the Lawndale organization, was recognized as an arm of the First Church. Rev. W. D. Fox, a student at Southeastern Seminary, was chosen pastor. Under his leadership, this new organization has grown rapidly. After fifteen months the membership had grown to 94, and the Sunday School had an average attendance of 120.

On February 21st, 1957, Mrs. J. T. True, who had been a loyal member of the First Baptist Church for many years, died, leaving to the church two houses, estimated to be worth $12,050. The church voted to sell this property and use the proceeds as follows:

1. To finish paying for the lot which has been purchased as a site for the Hunter Hills Baptist Church.

2. To purchase an organ and other musical instruments that will be needed in the Lawndale Baptist Church.

3. To purchase furniture and fixtures for the Lawndale Baptist Church.

The First Church also voted: "That the Hunter Hills Church site and the musical instruments purchased for the Lawndale Baptist Church be purchased, held, and used in memory of and as a memorial to Mrs. Fannie Rolfe True and her husband, J. T. True."

Plans for a new building on the Hunter Hills lot were approved in February, 1958. The building was to cost $95,000, and the Hunter Hills congregation agreed to assume responsibility for half of the amount. Ground-breaking services were held on Sunday afternoon, February 16, 1958. The building was completed and occupied in the late summer. The Hunter

Hills congregation was constituted as an independent Baptist church the last Sunday in 1958. Dr. Bowen presided at the service of constitution. Others on the program were S. C. Ray, Randall Lolley, Troy G. Robbins, T. L. Sasser, U. A. Hedrick, and William M. York. W. D. Fox, who has served as mission pastor, was called as pastor of the new church.

FRIENDLY ROAD—With a view to establishing a new church on Friendly Road, the First Baptist Church voted on June 8, 1958, to purchase six acres of land from the Crutchfield estate, on the corner of Friendly Road and Westridge Road, for the sum of $65,000. Two dwellings and a barn are situated on the property.

And now we come to the history of local improvements undertaken during these years.

Local Improvements

In 1956 the following improvements were made on the building and grounds of the church:

1. Acoustical treatment of the sanctuary was carried out, at a cost of $3,290.

2. Three beautiful nursery rooms were built and equipped under the front of the sanctuary, at a cost of $7,462.

3. Picnic and recreational area, and additional parking space, were provided at a cost of $14,921.64.

On July 30, 1958, upon recommendation of the Committee of the Advancement Program and the Deacons, the church adopted a four-point improvement plan:

1. Improvement of the sound system in the sanctuary, at a cost not to exceed $4,500.

2. Completion and enlargement of the organ in the sanctuary, at a cost of between $7,000 and $9,000.

3. Air-conditioning of the educational building, at a cost not to exceed $59,887.

4. Immediate promotion of a Youth Activities Program,

reconditioning of a recreation room on the ground floor of our educational building, and purchase of needed recreational equipment, the cost not to exceed $4,000.

With all the above named activities, the church did not neglect the all-important work of enlisting Christians and winning the lost at home and abroad. Two successful revivals were held during this period. The first was conducted by Dr. Baker James Cauthen, Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va. In the Fall of 1958, Dr. Roy McLain, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga., was the visiting evangelist. The music was directed by Mr. Frank Boggs. Large congregations attended all of the services, and the meeting resulted in sixty-one additions to the church, two-thirds of whom were on profession of faith. There were also many lives rededicated to God.

For the past eight years the men of the church have promoted Men's Fellowship dinner meetings, with good food, good fellowship, and good programs. Outstanding speakers from all over the country have been invited to address these meetings. Two years ago a more permanent organization was formed, with a president, vice-president, and secretary. The Royal Ambassador work is sponsored by this organization.

In the Fall of 1952 a kindergarten was started, with Miss Dorothy Cox as director. This project has been highly successful. There are now two kindergarten classes, with two teachers, and two assistant teachers.

Two additions were made to the church staff in 1958. In January of that year, Rev. T. L. Sasser, who for many years had been Missionary of the Piedmont Association, was called as part-time visitor, to serve for the year 1958. In March, Rev. W. Randall Lolley was called as assistant pastor. Apart from janitorial service, the staff now consists of fourteen members as follows:

Claud B. Bowen.....Pastor
W. Randall Lolley.....Assistant Pastor
S. C. Ray.....Minister of Education

E. L. Williams.....Minister of Music
Miss Dorothy Cox.....Director of Children's Work
Miss Nancy Kistler.....Youth Director
Mrs. R. W. Morton.....Financial Secretary
Mrs. Robert S. Maitland.....Educational Secretary
Mrs. O. E. Lee.....Hostess
Miss Ann Poole.....Pastor's Secretary
Mrs. Julian Lanier.....Secretary
Mrs. W. L. Wharton.....Visitor
Mrs. Ralph E. Hodgkin.....Organist
John R. Hancock.....Building Superintendent

Statistics cannot tell the whole story, but they give some conception of the work. At the close of the last associational year, the membership of the church was 3,804. The Sunday School had an enrolment of 3,349, with an average attendance of 1,652; there were 772 members of the Training Union, with an average attendance of 390; The W. M. U. enrolment was 795; the Vacation Bible School enrolled 669, with an average attendance of 561. There are five choirs, with an enrolment of over 200.

The financial receipts for the year were as follows: Current Expenses $119,288.25; Benevolences, $141,443.46; Advancement Fund, $110,329.06; Fellowship Fund, $2,588.24, making a grand total of $373,649.01 contributed during the year. This is an average of about $120.53 per resident member.

CHAPTER XII

The Torchbearers

Judge not that ye be not judged; we carried the torch
to the goal.
The goal won: guard the fire: it is yours: but remember our soul
Breathes through the life that we saved, when our
lives went out in the night;
Your body is woven of ours; see that the torch is
alight.

EDWIN J. O'BRIEN

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the author calls the roll of some of the faithful men and women who had served their day and generation and had fallen asleep. He says time would have failed to tell of all of them. In the beginning of the twelfth chapter, he pictures them as a great cloud of witnesses looking down upon those who were running in the Christian race; "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

We think of the faithful men and women who have served in this church, and have gone on to take their places in that great cloud of witnesses. It would be fitting to call the names of those who have served in places of leadership, and tell something of their work, but the list would be too long. There is also the danger that the names of some who have shared in the work might be omitted. Their names are recorded on high in God's

"book of remembrance." To those who have risen up to take their places, they would say:

> To you from falling hands we throw
> The torch; be yours to hold it high.
>
> JOHN MCCRAE

No story of the First Baptist Church of Greensboro would be complete without mention of the leading part the good women have had in its organization and growth through the years. It was a small band of faithful women that formed the nucleus of the church in its beginning. It was their sacrificial loyalty that kept it alive during the early years of struggle. It was their missionary vision and effort that kindled and kept alive the missionary spirit in the church. Those men who served as pastors in those early years would say with Paul, "Help those women which labored with me in the gospel." And every succeeding pastor would echo those words.

But all the great souls do not belong to the past. We would pay tribute to that great company of men and women who still live and carry on the work of the church. Conditions have changed, but the same loyalty and devotion that characterized those of other years still live. They have shown themselves to be men and women of vision, and the courage and consecration to make their dreams come true.

The church has not only contributed liberally of its material wealth for the work of the Kingdom, but it has also given of some of its choicest young men and women. Not as many as we could wish have gone into full-time religious work, but we rejoice in the increasing number who have answered the call in recent years. Some have gone to their reward, some are now in pastorates, some in other places of Christian service; and a large group is now in training in college and seminary. May their tribe increase.

Mrs. Charles Tucker has recorded words spoken by Dr. J. L. White in the beginning of his pastorate of this church: "Each

decade is but a child, standing upon the shoulders of the parent past, with hands stretched out toward the future; and so we, as a church, indeed having accomplished much, are yet but children resting upon the shoulders of the past, with hands stretched out toward the future."

PASTORS

The following have served as pastors of the church since its constitution in 1859:

John Mitchell, 1859-1861
J. B. Jackson, 1862-1863
Theo. Whitfield, 1864
P. H. Fountain, 1865-1866
F. H. Jones, 1868-1869
W. B. Harrell, 1870
J. B. Richardson, 1871-1874
Thomas Hume, 1875
S. F. Conrad, 1876
W. R. Gwaltney, 1877
H. Petty, 1877
Trezvant Harrison, 1878-1879
E. F. Baldwin, 1881-1883
W. R. Gwaltney, 1884-1890
W. B. Wingate, 1890-1892
C. A. G. Thomas, 1892-1895
Livingston Johnson, 1895-1901
W. Carey Newton, 1901-1902
Henry W. Battle, 1903-1907
J. L. White, 1908-1910
J. Clyde Turner, 1910-1948
Claud B. Bowen, 1948-

CHURCHES OF THE PIEDMONT BAPTIST ASSOCIATION AS OF JANUARY 1, 1959

	Date of Constitution		Date of Constitution
Mt. Zion	1826	Brightwood	1940
First, Greensboro	1859	Reedy Fork	1940
Summerfield	1865	Battleground Road	1943
First, Gibsonville	1894	McLeansville	1943
Eller Memorial	1897	South Elm Street	1945
Asheboro Street	1899	McConnell Road	1945
College Park	1906	Immanuel	1946
Pomona	1906	Southside	1947
Northside	1907	Lindley Park	1948
Sixteenth Street	1907	Martin Avenue	1948
Lebanon	1911	Honey-Rock	1948
Magnolia Street	1912	Lake Brandt	1948
Guilford	1914	Gethsemane	1949
Osceola	1915	Faith (Alamance)	1950
Florida Street	1916	Lankford Memorial	1950
Bessemer	1922	Calvary	1951
Stevens Memorial	1922	Camp Herman	1951
Jessup Grove	1933	Hillcrest	1951
Pleasant Garden	1933	Pinecroft	1951
Community	1934	Plain View	1951
Rocky Knoll	1934	Love	1952
Rankin	1935	Jones Memorial	1953
Buchanan	1936	Briggs Memorial	1954
Pleasant Grove	1937	Straightway	1954
Woodard Memorial	1939	Temple	1957

APPENDIX

Dr. J. Clyde Turner wrote this history of First Baptist Church of Greensboro. Several times he mentions Mrs. Turner and himself, but to be complete, there should be more about these two people who were most active, for more than thirty-seven years, in making the history of the First Church in Greensboro, and the history of the Baptist denomination in North Carolina and the South.

In grateful appreciation of the outstanding contribution of both Dr. and Mrs. Turner to the history of First Baptist Church of Greensboro, and in loving gratitude for what they mean to all who were members of the Church during the thirty-seven years of his pastorate, we have, for the Church, compiled some of the many fine things that have been written about them, under the title of "Our Dr. and Mrs. Turner." Included, also, are a few of Dr. Turner's letters and "Pastor's Paragraphs" printed from time to time in the First Baptist Church Bulletin, and brief biographies of Dr. and Mrs. Turner.

The paragraphs and sentences in quotation marks were taken from articles written by John Arch McMillan, editor of *Charity and Children,* December 1946; by A. Wayland Cooke in *Biblical Recorder,* November 8, 1933; by Marvin Sykes, in *Greensboro Daily News,* December 10, 1940; by Robert Farley, Daily News staff writer, December 1, 1947; by Stafford R. Webb, in Church Bulletin, December 7, 1947; and by J. D. Wilkins, prominent Baptist layman.

GLADYS AND WM. M. YORK

December, 1958

Dr. and Mrs. J. Clyde Turner

"Our Dr. and Mrs. Turner"

For more than thirty-seven years Dr. Turner was pastor of First Baptist Church, building into it the strength of faith, stewardship, and harmonious unity. He and Mrs. Turner gave so much of themselves in their service that they will always be a part of the church and will always be "Our Dr. and Mrs. Turner."

J. Clyde Turner was born March 31, 1878 to Nancy Tuck and John C. Turner, in Bethany community, Iredell County, near Statesville, North Carolina. He was the youngest of five children, having one brother and three sisters.

Mrs. Turner didn't know Dr. Turner when he was a boy, but she is sure there were many "boyish" incidents "because he has always been full of pranks." She has heard how he served, with another boy, as janitor of the church, each receiving $2.00 a month! When fifteen he worked in a tobacco factory, eleven hours a day, at 35 cents a day! He started to a country school at six years of age; later attended graded school, when it was first organized in Statesville; and was prepared for college in a private school.

Inspired by two men from his home church, who had gone to Wake Forest College and whom he had heard preach, Dr. Turner, at ten years of age, said he was going to Wake Forest to become a preacher. He carried out his determination to go to Wake Forest but steered away from the thought of being a preacher, though deep down in his heart the thought lay buried.

Dr. Turner was not a ministerial student when he attended Wake Forest, 1895-1899, but he was a very busy and outstanding student. He was Anniversary Orator of Euzelian Society, and was valedictorian of his class on graduation. He was also catcher on the College baseball team.

After graduation, Dr. Turner taught in Durham High School, 1899-1901, and then went to the Masonic Orphanage at Oxford to help W. J. Hicks with the management. "It was while he was teaching in Durham that he made a talk in one of the churches in Durham. After the talk, Dr. W. C. Tyree, pastor of the First Baptist Church, put his arm around him and said, 'My boy, you ought to preach.' That brought the matter out in the open, and J. Clyde Turner later made his arrangements to go to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where his scholastic record was as brilliant as that which he made at Wake Forest."

Dr. Turner went to the Seminary, 1902-1905, and was pastor at Fisherville, Kentucky, while in the Seminary; and at Newport, Kentucky, 1905-1907. "Now to return to Oxford and the happenings there, for it so chanced that Colonel Hicks had a daughter, Bertha, a gracious, cultured young woman. She and her father's young business associate were often in each other's company. A friendship arose that culminated, some years later, in a marriage that lengthened into a happy and most useful life together. The marriage took place in 1908 in the chapel of the Oxford Orphanage. At that time Mr. Turner was pastor of Tattnal Church, Macon, Georgia.

"While at Macon, Dr. Turner contracted tuberculosis, though the doctors failed to diagnose his illness as such. He struggled on with occasional hemorrhages of the lungs until he was stricken with typhoid fever. There was not much left of him physically when he recovered from typhoid. He resigned his work in Macon and went to a tubercular sanatorium in Black Mountain, North Carolina. He says now, 'According to all human standards I ought to be dead.' He is certainly right, there. He had active tuberculosis, but he did not die. He rightly says that the Lord gave him back his health. After getting off the train at Black Mountain, he never coughed again. During the first eleven days he gained eleven pounds. He remained in the sanatorium seven months.

"While he was there, the Greensboro Baptist Church called him as pastor. He laughingly reports he does not know of another Baptist Church anywhere that went to a tubercular sanatorium to call a pastor. For three months he went down to Greensboro and preached on Sunday and then went back and stayed in the sanatorium during the week. At the end of three months he and Mrs. Turner moved to Greensboro."

✓ ✓ ✓

"On December 4, 1910, Rev. J. Clyde Turner became the pastor of First Baptist Church in Greensboro. He came in the morning of his young manhood, bringing with him later his wife, Bertha Hicks Turner, who traveled along life's pathway with him and, modestly, in the shadow of her distinguished husband, played no little part in his splendid career. A minister's wife! She lifted him by her devotion, loyalty, spirituality and encouragement to accomplishments he never dreamed of. No pastor was ever more greatly helped in his work than was Dr. Turner by his noble wife. As a gifted teacher of a large Bible class, as pastor's wife, as a woman of culture, refinement, poise, prudence, sympathy, and spirituality she was his inspiration and help, and was invaluable to the church."

The following tributes have been paid to Dr. Turner: "A profound and thorough student of the Scriptures, from whence he gets his inspiration, a man of deep piety, Dr. Turner preaches the word of God. His fine sense of propriety and proportion, his endowment of common sense, and his moral courage, give him that boldness to preach Jesus Christ in a way that wins the hearts of men."

"His intense earnestness, his evident sincerity and consecration, his modesty, and above all, his fundamental soundness of doctrine and Christian principles, all combined to hold his congregation year after year. No congregation in the state was cared for more tenderly and with more of a sympathetic understanding. Then, too, there was no congregation within the

bounds of the Southern Baptist Convention that was privileged to hear sermons of a higher order."

"During this time Dr. Turner's ministry and influence were not confined to his congregation and city. The constituency of the Baptist State Convention, of which he was president for four years, was not slow to recognize his merit, and during the years he came to the favorable notice of all Baptists of the state, and rose to a place of leadership in their midst that is probably not exceeded by any man in the convention. He has been called the best-loved pastor in the Baptist State Convention.

"Dr. Turner also became a leading figure in the affairs of the Southern Baptist Convention. There is hardlly a phase of the denomination's work in the South that has not felt his influence. Wherever Baptist conventions have met, he has been there and has made his influence felt on their platforms and in their councils.

"Dr. Turner's reputation as a speaker and minister extends far beyond the state and the South. He has spoken to gatherings of Baptists all over the nation, from country churches to the World Baptist Alliance, which includes representatives of Baptists the world over. He appeared on the program at the huge gathering of young people in connection with the Baptist World Alliance in Toronto, Canada, in 1929; and later, when the Northern and Southern Baptists met in joint session in Washington, Dr. Turner shared with Dr. George Truett, of Dallas, Texas, the honor of representing Southern Baptists on the program. He was active in the Baptist World Alliance in Atlanta, Georgia. He was a delegate to the Baptist World Alliance in Stockholm, Sweden, and, with Mrs. Turner, he later returned to the European continent for a survey visit through the Holy Land."

Dr. Turner served several terms as trustee of Wake Forest College and was President of the Board one term. He served on the Board of the Southern Baptist Seminary for about 25 years, 10 years as President of the Board.

Dr. Turner has had published many tracts and magazine articles, enlargements of sermons and addresses, and a group of meaningful and helpful books, including: *Truth in a Smile, Gospel of the Grace of God, Our Baptist Heritage, Soul Winning Doctrines, New Testament Doctrine of the Church, These Things We Believe.*

When Mrs. Turner was asked to list what Dr. Turner regards as the most outstanding events in his ministry, she wrote: "Clyde seems to think there is nothing especially outstanding to record. Certainly his has been a life devoted to a high ideal from which he has not turned aside. The results have been most gratifying and we rejoice in the continued progress being made."

* * *

Mrs. J. Clyde Turner, nee Bertha May Hicks, was born and reared in Raleigh, North Carolina. She was the youngest daughter of Colonel and Mrs. W. J. Hicks. She was converted and baptized under the ministry of Dr. J. L. White, who was later pastor of First Baptist Church in Greensboro. Bertha Hicks was educated in the schools of Raleigh, and in Salem College.

As a teen-ager, Bertha Hicks taught a class in Sunday School; and as Mrs. J. Clyde Turner, she taught the Woman's Bible Class in First Baptist Church, 1912-1948. It is as "our Sunday School teacher" that many women think of her best and love her most.

Mrs. Turner received her missionary inspiration and training from Miss Fannie Heck, whom she assisted in the early years of the women's organized work. Mrs. Turner was always an active leader in the Woman's Missionary Society of First Baptist Church. She would never consent to be president of the local Society but served as advisor for several of the young matron groups and was first choice as teacher of Mission Study books and as counselor in all Missionary Society activities.

In 1936 Mrs. Turner was elected President of the State

Woman's Missionary Union and served until 1942. She was also a member of the Executive Committee of the State W. M. U.

Mrs. Turner always found her place and part in leadership in all the plans and activities of the church, and the women of the church were deeply grateful to her and for her. When the new church building was completed, the Woman's Missionary Society decorated and furnished the church parlor honoring Mrs. Turner. Members of the Woman's Bible Class placed in the parlor a portrait of Mrs. Turner as a token of their love and appreciation.

In all the tributes to Dr. Turner during his ministry, tributes to Mrs. Turner were usually included. "The whole story of Dr. Turner's brilliant success could not be explained without the mention of his life's companion. She matches him in both heart and mental power."

* * *

"For thirty-seven years the people of First Baptist Church were richly blessed with the ministry of Dr. and Mrs. J. Clyde Turner. During those years the church grew in numbers and influence to a position of leadership throughout the South. But always they held before the church a goal of greater service than was attained.

"They held a place in every family, joining in occasions of celebration, helping in times of distress, and rejoicing in the achievements of children who looked to them as advisors and friends.

"All classes of people in and out of the church held Dr. Turner in high esteem. Praise of his sincerity and devotion was heard on the street, in the shops, and wherever men gathered."

"How do you First Baptists *do* it?" is a question often asked in connection with the financial affairs of the church; and the answer always begins with, "Dr. Turner taught us and trained us and led us." Dr. Turner taught that when a person becomes a Christian he becomes God's steward of himself and all his pos-

sessions, and that a good steward follows God's teachings in the Bible about tithing. He was vitally interested in all phases of the denominational program: schools, orphanages, hospitals, homes for the aged, evangelism, home and foreign missions, and trained his people so that First Baptist Church gives more for benevolences than for operating expenses of the local church. Dr. and Mrs. Turner always led by setting an example for the church to follow.

✓ ✓ ✓

The inspired and inspiring leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Turner was shown in the planning and building of the new church on the corner of Madison and Mendenhall. In 1937, Mrs. Turner (as a member of the church, her name withheld by request) gave $2,500.00 as a challenge to the other members to give an additional $7,500.00 in twelve months, to start a Building Fund. Over a period of ten years, Dr. Turner kept information of the progress of the Fund before the membership, through his "Pastor's Paragraphs" in the weekly church bulletins. His consistent reminders and encouragement meant much to the members. Bible verses Dr. Turner used were treasured inspiration: "And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work." Nehemiah 2:18. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Psalm 127:1. "O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine Holy Name cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own." I Chronicles 29:16.

First Baptist Church members received two special "Messages From Our Pastor" in the form of special bulletins:

In May 1940—

> On their journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan, the children of Israel came to Kadesh-barnea. The goodly land was just ahead, and they might have entered in and taken possession. But they did not have the faith and courage and conse-

cration to go forward. As a result, they turned back to wander for forty years in the wilderness.

Our church has come to a critical hour in its history. What we do in this hour will largely determine the immediate future of our church. If we have faith and courage and consecration, we can go forward with our plans for a new church building. If we are found lacking in these qualities of character, we will turn back to wander for some years in the wilderness of uncertainty.

We have no wealthy members in our church. Some have more, and some have less, of material goods. We can go forward only as all go together, each one giving according to his ability. But let us ever keep in mind that we do not want anyone to give to the building fund by decreasing his pledge to current expenses and benevolences.

Let us keep one great motive before us—the glory of our Lord. If we allow any other motive to have first place, we cannot hope and pray for God's blessings upon us. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."

Let no one think it is an easy task ahead for us. It is a task that calls for earnest prayer and sacrificial effort. But if we love the Lord, we are not seeking an easy task.

Your devoted pastor,
(signed) J. Clyde Turner

Then in May 1945—

My Dear Friends:

For nearly thirty-five years we have worked together in this church. Under the blessings of God, we have seen it grow in numbers and influence. For several years we have faced the need for larger and better physical equipment with which to carry on our work. We have made some progress in our efforts to meet this need.

We have now come to the time when we must think seriously about our building program. The time when the way for building will be open is not so far off, and yet, we are far from ready. Prices have almost doubled since we launched our program, and there is no assurance that they will drop to anything like pre-war levels for several years.

We do not have a rich church. So far as I know, there is not a rich person in its membership. But we do have those who are rich in faith, and love, and loyalty, and those are the best riches. Now, while we have some measure of material prosperity, is the time to build up an adequate fund with which to meet our building needs.

May I say a personal word? I had hoped to see our new building erected during my active pastorate, but those hopes are gradually and surely fading. I remember that David wanted to build a house for the Lord, but his wish was not granted. He purchased the site on which the temple was to stand, and collected gold and silver with which to build, and gave liberally of his own substance, but another was to build the house. David said that didn't matter, "for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God."

We are planning to build a house for the Lord God. It matters little who gets the credit. We want it to stand as a lasting memorial of our love and devotion to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us." My one desire is that we may be ready when God's clock strikes.

With abiding love,

Yours in His Name,
(signed) J. Clyde Turner

* * *

On Sunday, November 30, 1947, at the close of the morning service, Dr. J. Clyde Turner resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church. On the following Sunday, his resignation was carried in the church bulletin and, with a picture of Dr. Turner, the bulletin was lovingly dedicated to Dr. and Mrs. Turner on their thirty-seventh anniversary in our church.

To the Members of the First Baptist Church
Greensboro, North Carolina

My Dear Friends:

Today completes thirty-seven years of the present pastorate of this church. They have been happy years, and have passed all too quickly. I am sorry that the record of service has not been

better. I find myself wishing that I could go back and try again, but the years have gone, never to return. You have been wonderfully patient and forgiving toward my failures and mistakes, which have been many.

Should I live until the 31st day of March 1948, I will have reached the Bible span of three-score-years and ten. The Lord has been gracious in giving me health and strength. But when a man reaches that age, he has to slow down. You will agree with me that this is no time for the work of this church to slow down. Rather, it is a time for making large plans for the future, and prosecuting those plans vigorously. The time has come for younger hands to take the helm. Therefore, I am presenting my resignation as pastor of this church to take effect the last day of next March. In retiring from the pastorate, I am not retiring from the ministry. I expect to continue to preach the glorious gospel of Christ as long as God shall give me strength.

It is needless for me to say that this church will ever hold a large place in my heart. For her my prayers shall ascend. May God lead you on to larger things in His service.

Yours in Christian love,
(signed) J. CLYDE TURNER

"The resignation brought unanimous expressions of regret from members of the congregation. Tears were noted in the eyes of many. By most of the members of his congregation, Dr. Turner was considered a member of the family, as well as friend. He rejoiced with them on happy occasions and shared with them griefs when they came. Many of them he baptized into the church, conducted their wedding ceremonies, and performed last rites for many of their loved ones.

"One remarkable thing about the pastorate of Dr. Turner was the fact that through the years there was no hint of dissatisfaction or factionalism within the congregation. The tact and superior wisdom of the pastor played a large part in maintaining unity in such a large group. His purpose was ever to please God and not man, never discussing personal or controversial issues offensively. One of the laymen of the church said: 'Dr. Turner can keep silent in more languages than any man I have

ever seen, when it seems best not to talk; yet he does not hesitate to speak out if occasion demands."

Through an editorial in Greensboro Daily News—"The entire community joined with the members of the First Baptist Church in sharing the regret occasioned by the resignation of Dr. J. Clyde Turner after 37 years of active, inspiring and fruitful ministry to that congregation.

"Dr. Turner's contribution to the richer, fuller life of Greensboro, although working essentially through and with his own church, has been incalculable. He has been one of those pillars upon whom the community has rested in a spiritual growth and humanitarian service which balanced and implemented its material progress. Dr. Turner has wrought himself into the lives of thousands of the community's residents and thus into the community structure itself.

"Recognition of his contribution has come not only in the esteem and affection in which he is held here, but he has occupied one major position of leadership after another on a state and even national level, and has influenced mightily the course of his great denomination and its achievements. Thirty-seven years of service in one ministry carries its own commentary upon the qualities of Dr. Turner as a man, as citizen and as servant of God. He, his church and his community have gone forward hand in hand.

"Those who know Dr. Turner best know that after he has taken the rest which he plans and which he has so richly earned, after his resignation becomes effective, he will not remain idle but that as God gives him strength he will continue to serve in furtherance of the high cause and lifting purpose to which he has given the cumulative years of his life."

* * *

When Dr. and Mrs. Turner first came to Greensboro, in 1910, they lived in the church parsonage at 430 West Gaston Street.

In 1931 they moved into their own home, 2601 West Market Street. After Dr. Turner's resignation, they sold their home and moved to Raleigh, into the lovely old home of Mrs. Turner's parents. Wherever they live, the Christian atmosphere of their home and their own warm hospitality create the same feeling of security and happiness for their relatives, friends and guests.

Though now residents of Raleigh and members of First Baptist Church of Raleigh, Dr. and Mrs. Turner are still a part of the First Church in Greensboro. A wonderful, fine relationship exists between his successor, Dr. Claud Bowen, and Dr. Turner —a relationship akin to that of father and son. Dr. Bowen often speaks of Dr. Turner from the pulpit and refers to him affectionately as *his* pastor.

Upon coming to Greensboro, Dr. Bowen conferred with Dr. Turner and consulted him about his dreams, wishes, and plans for the new church building, the foundation for which had been so well laid by Dr. and Mrs. Turner. As the dreams and plans for the new building developed, Dr. Bowen brought Dr. and Mrs. Turner back to Greensboro to have their share in each important ceremony. They were here for the groundbreaking and laying of the corner stone. Dr. Turner made the principal address at each of these events. Dr. Turner preached the first sermon in the new sanctuary, on Sunday, November 30, 1952; and after the debt on the new church was paid in 1955, he preached the dedicatory sermon, Sunday, January 1, 1956.

Dr. Bowen has invited Dr. Turner to preach one of the sermons during the centennial celebration of our church in March, 1959. Dr. Turner's history of First Baptist Church of Greensboro is being published by our church as a part of our centennial celebration. This history not only has been written by Dr. Turner, but a major part of it has been made by "Our Dr. and Mrs. Turner."

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